

# David and the Law of the Inner Circle

## *A Leader's Potential is Determined by Those Closest to Him*

### 1 Chronicles 11:10 – 12:40

There are no Lone Ranger leaders. If you're alone, you're not *leading* anybody.

Think of any highly effective leader and you will find someone surrounded by a strong inner circle.

Hire the best staff you can find, develop them as much as you can, and hand off everything you possibly can to them. When you have the right staff, potential skyrockets.

You see, every leader's potential is determined by the people closest to him. If those people are strong, then the leader can make a huge impact. If they are weak, he can't.

Examine the way David pulled together the core people who made him great:

1. ***He started building a strong inner circle before he needed it.***  
David began building his team long before he was crowned king. First Chronicles emphasizes how many of the warriors who flocked to David were leaders (1 Chr. 12:14). David didn't attract just anyone; he attracted strong leaders.
2. ***He attracted people with varied gifts.***  
David attracted men of diverse abilities. We read of experienced warriors with a variety of skills – ambidextrous bowmen, slingers, and spearmen – many mighty

men of valor, and hundreds of captains. With the help of these men, David felt ready for anything.

3. ***He engendered loyalty.***  
David's followers displayed incredible loyalty to him throughout his life. In the early days, three of his men risked their lives to get him some water from a favorite well in Bethlehem. Decades later his closest men stayed with him even when it looked as though Absalom might crush his father (2 Sam 15:21). Those closest to David always put their lives on the line for him.
4. ***He delegated responsibility based on ability.***  
David continually gave authority to others. He designated Joab as commander of the army, and he felt equally secure in giving other civil authority (1 Chr. 18:14-17). Of course, delegating authority always entails risk – witness Joab's unilateral decision to kill Abner (2 Sam 3:22-30). But great leaders risk delegation in order to reach the highest level of leadership.

## Inner Circle Qualities

The following qualities spell out the words *inner circle*. Look for these traits in the people you depend on most:

**Influential** – Everything begins with influence. If you want to extend your reach, you must attract and lead other leaders. More than twelve hundred leaders are mentioned in the list of warriors who came to David (1 Chr. 12:23-37)

**Networking** – *Who* people know is just as important as *what* they know. When David hid from Saul, he was able to escape with the help of those who cared about him.

**Nurturing** – People who care about each other take care of each other. Your inner circle should prop you up. Certainly Jonathan is the best example of a nurturer in David's life. He loved David unconditionally, encouraged him, and guarded his life.

**Empowering** – The members of your inner circle should enable you to achieve more than you could alone. David's mighty men empowered him to accomplish incredible things.

**Resourceful** – Inner circle members should always add value. When David desired to conquer Jerusalem, he offered to make the man who led the charge chief over his army (2 Sam 5:6-10) – and Joab won control of the armed forces.

**Character-driven** – The character of an inner circle member matters more than any other quality. People of weak character in David's inner circle cost him dearly. But people of strong character often helped to steer him out of trouble.

**Intuitive** – While every person is naturally intuitive in his area of gifting, that doesn't mean everyone uses his or her intuition. As you seek members for your inner circle, rely on those who have learned to trust their instincts.

Responsible – Those closest to you should never leave you hanging. If you ask them to carry the ball, they must follow through. David’s companions made his cause their own.

Competent – You can’t get anything done if your people can’t do their jobs. You don’t need world-class performers exclusively, but all of your inner circle people must perform with excellence. The skill of David’s people helped make him great.

Loyal – Loyalty alone does not make people candidates for your inner circle, but lack of loyalty definitely disqualifies them. David’s people stuck with him even to death. Don’t keep anyone close to you whom you cannot trust.

Energetic – Energy covers a multitude of mistakes, for it helps a person to keep coming back, failure after failure. Without tenacity, David and his men never would have survived in the wilderness, nor would they have made the nation secure from its enemies.

### **Look around!**

When God wants a leader to do something of value for Him, He provides that leader with the individuals to get the job done. That was true for David, and it will be true for you. All you need to do is look around.

# The Law of Priorities:

## Nehemiah Wisely Uses His Resources

### Nehemiah 3: 1-32

Thomas Jefferson once said, "No duty the executive has to perform is so trying to put the right man in the right place." Shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem, we see Nehemiah busily at work putting the right men in the right places.

The text lists specific men as the builders of specific gates. Why? Nehemiah has placed them in stations according to their natural gifts and interests and has them build the portion of the wall in front of their homes. Talk about self-motivation!

Nehemiah recognized the principles that make organizations progress:

1. **Motivation without organization equals frustration.**
2. **The strongest organizations are the simplest.**
3. **Leaders love everybody, but move with the movers.**
4. **Good organizations establish clear lines of authority.**
5. **People do what you inspect, not what you expect.**
6. **Leaders provide a supportive climate of trust and teamwork.**
7. **Successful organizations recognize and reward effort.**

# **The Irony of Spiritual Leadership: Get Understanding but Don't Lean on it**

## **Proverbs 3:5, 6**

Proverbs 2 and 3 poses an apparent paradox in spiritual leadership. We are to get wisdom and understanding (2:1-5), yet we are not to lean on it apart from the Lord (3:5, 6). Even good wisdom divorced from God can become a snare.

So how are Godly leaders to think?

- 1. Godly leaders think big: They realize God's vision is usually bigger than theirs.**
- 2. Godly leaders think other people: They always include others in the mix.**
- 3. Godly leaders think continually: They're not satisfied with today's answers.**
- 4. Godly leaders think bottom line: They want to see results and fruit.**
- 5. Godly leaders think continual growth: They want to keep improving.**
- 6. Godly leaders think without lines: They let God outside the box.**
- 7. Godly leaders think victory: They want to see God's rule come to earth.**
- 8. Godly leaders think intuitively: They have a sense of what will work.**
- 9. Godly leaders think servant hood: They want to serve and add value to people.**
- 10. Godly leaders think quickly: They evaluate quickly and see possible answers.**

# The Law of Influence: Leaders Must Have a Skillful Tongue

Proverbs 10:6-32

A number of verses on Proverbs speak of the tongue and how to use it as a positive influence. Leaders who use words skillfully increase their influence.

Leaders who understand the power of their words accomplish the following:

1. **They proclaim justice and are blessed (v.6).**
2. **They speak hope for the future, becoming a fountain of life to others (v.11).**
3. **They speak forth wisdom and save others from ruin (vv.13, 14).**
4. **They know when silence is more powerful than words (v.19).**
5. **Their words feed and nourish many others (v.21).**
6. **They express what is right and nurture the right in the hearts of those who follow (vv.31, 32).**

# **The Law of the Inner Circle: Your Advisors Will Make or Break You**

## **Proverbs 11:14**

Every leader ought to build an inner circle that adds value to him or her and to the leadership of the organization. But choose well, for the members of this inner circle will become your closest confidants, your inner circle will make you or break you.

Proverbs 11:14 says, "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." So who belongs in the "counsel," in this inner circle? Strive for the following:

1. Creative people
2. Loyal people
3. People who share your vision
4. Wise and intelligent people
5. People with complementary gifts
6. People with influence
7. People of faith
8. People of integrity

## Jonah 1-3

1. We assume healthy personal responsibility (1:12).
2. We'll likely see many come to faith in God (1:13-16).
3. We receive a God-given time and place to gain perspective (1:17).
4. We deepen our experience of worship and prayer (2:1-9).
5. We progress toward a new level of personal freedom (2:10).
6. We enjoy partnership with God (3:1-9).
7. We gain the satisfaction of seeing changed lives (3:10).



## Effective Leadership Invites Partnership

### Proverbs 13:20

You become like those with whom you partner.

Choose your partners for many of the same reasons a leader chooses his or her inner circle. Choose those who add value to you and can benefit from you. Both leaders and organizations should see improvement for having entered into partnership.

## Master Communication and You Manage Conflict

### Proverbs 15:1-7

God rightly expects leaders to manage conflict within their organizations. But how can you best accomplish this.

A good place to start is Proverbs 15:1—yet while we often quote this verse, we seldom practice it. Sometimes only the leaders are given liberty to express anger, and sooner or later this kind of unhealthy environment comes back to haunt them. Leaders must create safe places for communication. Master communication and you manage conflict. Look at the first seven verses of Proverbs 15 and note its counsel about managing conflict.

1. **Remain calm and gentle when confronting conflict and your example will become contagious (v.1).**
2. **Speak wisely, making sure your information is truthful and accurate (v.2).**
3. **Remember, God is the ultimate judge and will execute justice (v.3).**
4. **Use your words to foster healing; fix the problem, not the blame (v.4).**
5. **Stay teachable; be open to correction and quick to apologize when wrong (v.5).**
6. **Add value to everyone who contacts you, even when you disagree (v.6).**
7. **Speak words that spread knowledge and understanding (v.7).**

## **The Law of Navigation**

### **Proverbs 16:1-3**

Effective leaders practice the Law of Navigation. Proverbs 16 opens with these words: “The preparation of the heart belongs to man, but the answer of the tongues is from the Lord. All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirits. Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established” (vv1-3).

- Check the source of our wisdom
- Check our motives
- Check the outcome we are pursuing

Consider five keys to understanding how God helps leaders to navigate their way through life.

1. **Process:** God’s plan usually unfolds over time. What is He revealing progressively?
2. **Purpose:** God wants to accomplish His purposes. Why were you created?
3. **Potential:** God will use your gifts and passion. Does this goal fit who you are?
4. **Prioritize:** God will ask you to adjust your time and energy. What steps must you take?
5. **Proceed:** God will eventually require you to act. When should you start?

## **It’s Not About Position, But Empowerment**

### **Proverbs 17:2**

Our influence has less to do with our position or title than it does with the life we live. It’s not about position, but production. It is not the education we get, but the empowerment we give, that makes a difference to others.

The key word is credibility. We gain credibility when our life matches our talk and when both add value to others. In the words Proverbs 17:2, it’s better to be a wise slave than a foolish son. Answer the following vital questions:

1. **Consistency:** Are you the same person no matter who’s with you?
2. **Choices:** Do you make decisions based on how they benefit you or others?
3. **Credit:** Are you quick to recognize others for their efforts when you succeed?
4. **Character:** Do you work harder at your image or your integrity?
5. **Credibility:** Have you recognized that credibility is a victory, not a gift?

## **Leaders Know the Difference**

### **Proverbs 21:1**

Leaders can and should make their plans, but they must never forget that it is God who controls the future. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord”, says the Bible. “Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes “(Prov. 21:1). Successful leaders remember this and therefore know the difference between being in charge and being in control.

We kid ourselves if we think we are in control. We may have charge of a group, but the best we can do is remain under control. God is the ultimate Leader, and He is forever in control. It has been rightly said: “We don’t know what the future holds, but we do know the One who holds the future.”

## **Vision: Hope for a Preferred Future**

### **Proverbs 23:7-19**

Leaders understand the importance of their minds to the future of their organizations. Consider some of the timeless principles offered in Proverbs 23 about our minds and a godly vision for tomorrow:

1. Your thoughts determine your character (v7).
2. Be careful of your thoughts; they may break into words at any time (7).
3. Don’t waste your thoughts on those who don’t hunger for them (v.9).
4. The first person you lead is you, and the first organ you master is your mind (v.12).
5. Don’t let your mind drift away from God’s truth and into vain envy (v.17).
6. Stay confident that your vision will come to pass (v.18).
7. Discipline your thoughts to remain steadfast in what you know is right (v.19).

## The Law of the Picture: The Leader Causes People

### To Thrive or Groan

#### Proverbs 29:2-18

People reflect their leader. We cannot expect followers to grow beyond their leader. We cannot expect followers to turn out fundamentally different from their leader. People feel attracted to leaders like them; they also reflect those who lead them. Consider what Proverbs 29 tells us about the influence of good and bad leaders.

1. **Attitudes (v.2)** When good leaders rule, people rejoice, when the wicked reign, people groan.
2. **Stability (v.4)** When moral leaders rule, they establish justice; compromising leaders tear things down.
3. **Compassion (v.7)** Good leaders express concern for the poor; bad leaders reflect no compassion for anyone.
4. **Honesty (v.12)** When leaders pay attention to lies, their staff begins to esteem the same deceptions.
5. **Vision (v.18)** Solid vision keeps everyone on track; chaos reigns wherever the vision lapses.

# A Woman Leader

## Proverbs 31:10-31

Proverbs 31 no doubt gets more airtime on Mother's Day than any other passage of scripture. The majority of the proverb describes a virtuous woman who leads her home with integrity, discipline, and giftedness. This wife and mother is a leader not because she tries to be one, but because of who she is.

### Her Assets

1. She is trustworthy (v.11).
2. She is a positive influence (v.12).
3. She is a hard worker (vv.13, 14, 19, 24-27).
4. She is a planner (vv.21, 22).
5. She is protective (v.27).

### Her Achievements

1. She meets the needs of her home (v.15)
2. She invests for her household(v.16)
3. She keeps herself in shape (v.17).
4. She helps her husband become successful(v.23)

### Her Attitudes

1. Delightful(v.13)
2. Healthy(v.18)
3. Compassionate(v.20)
4. Unselfish(v.20)
5. Public (v.25)

### Her Applause

1. From her family (v.28)
2. From her husband (v.28,29)
3. From God's Word (v.30)
4. From her works (v.31)

**Ecclesiastes**, like the Book of Job, presents one of the greatest challenges to understanding in the Bible. Ancient Hebrews used to debate its meaning and whether it should even be included in the canon of scripture. Fortunately for us, by divine providence, Ecclesiastes did make it into the Bible with its unique message.

The central themes of the book focus on the meaning of life, motives for behavior, and where God fits into our personal mission-paramount issues for every leader

Our relationship must be about something much bigger than us. If our leadership advances merely our own ‘kingdom’ only increases the profits of our company, or only benefits ourselves-we have failed the higher call of leadership. All leadership must bring honor to God, serve and benefit others, and utilize the gifts of each team member to their fullest potential.

The tone of this book displays an overriding pessimism, as expressed through the words ‘under the sun’ or ‘under heaven’. The writer explores life almost devoid of a divine perspective, lived from a selfish, humanistic worldview. He generally leaves God out of his deliberations, leaving himself with human reason alone and resulting in superficial and shallow relationship.

A second theme of the book deals with our motives. Why we do something ultimately determines what we do. The author shows from personal; experience that all earthly goals and blessings, when pursued as an end in themselves, leads to dissatisfaction and emptiness.

Finally, the book answers the question, where does God fit into our personal mission? All good leaders operate from a personal and corporate mission statement. Vision drives them. In chapter two alone, this book questions the materialistic mission of building buildings, making money, controlling workers, and pursuing pleasure. Of Course, there’s nothing wrong with building buildings, money, or workers-as long as they serve only as a means to eternal end, not an end in themselves.

Instead, leaders ought to wrestle with how they might change eternity through leadership. After reading this book, leaders should ask themselves: ‘Who am I? Why am I attempting to lead others? Where am I trying to go? What values guide my life? “The final chapter reminds us that a day of reckoning awaits when God will bring all these issues to light.

## **God's Role in Ecclesiastes**

Leaders cannot find genuine fulfillment outside of linking their lives to God's purpose for the world. As "the preacher" explores various avenues for satisfaction—power, possession, prestige, pleasure—he finds them hollow. God moves him along the path of discovery until he finds no real meaning to life "under heaven" but only in relationship to God and His eternal purposes. God provides all meaning and fulfillment in this life. The author could not find anything of value apart from a life lived in obedience to God's calling.

## **Leaders in Ecclesiastes**

"The Preacher," God

## **Other People of Influence in Ecclesiastes**

Wise men, fools

## **Lessons in Leadership**

- No real meaning exists apart from linking our lives to God's purpose
- Humanism and materialism provide incomplete counsel for decision making
- Possessions, people, pleasure, prestige, and power make great servants but poor masters.
- Timing is key: When to lead is as important as what to do and where to go.
- People are motivated by a variety of incentives.
- Divine wisdom provides direction, protection, correction, and resolution.
- Leaders must invest themselves generously, knowing the payoff comes later.

## **Vision: If Life Has No Meaning, Leadership Has No Mission**

*Ecclesiastes 1:3-11*

“Life is vanity,” writes Solomon. Imagine the wisest, richest, most powerful man in his time, proclaiming everything worthless! Solomon’s name means “peace,” but he enjoyed none of it while writing most of this book. He grew deflated, depressed, and disillusioned about life “under the sun.” Here we see a leader who lost the air in his sails because he abandoned his true mission. He teaches us...

**1. There is no profit (v. 3-4).**

Life without God is an exercise in futility. Generations come and go; all we do is move things around.

**2. There is no purpose (v. 5-7).**

The sun rises only to set again, endlessly repeating a meaningless cycle. Wind blows, river flows, all is monotony.

**3. There is no progress (v. 8-11).**

There is no satisfaction; there’s nothing new under the sun, nor pleasant remembrance of earlier life.

Leadership without an eternal perspective falls into the trap of meaninglessness. Leadership must work toward significant, meaningful goals. We are forced to conclude that:

**1. If nothing worthwhile exists under the sun, our only hope must lie above it.**

**2. If the man with everything investigated every visible delight and still wound up unsatisfied, then what satisfies must be invisible.**

**3. If the wisest man on earth finds no answers under heaven, then we must look to heaven itself for those answers.**



## The Law of Priorities and the Law of Sacrifice:

### Things Don't Make a Leader

*Ecclesiastes 2:1-26*

Solomon attempted to find satisfaction in accumulating things: houses, gardens, vineyards, flocks, slaves, etc. He found all of it empty.

Many leaders succumb to the same temptation. They begin well, but once they reach their first level of goals – if they don't continue to stretch – they shrink. Their shrinking often takes the form of accumulating. Their success gains them a nice discretionary income. So they spend and gain. Spend and gain. Spend and gain. But none of this fills the void inside.

All leaders have two major voids:

- 1. The God-sized vacuum inside their heart; only the Lord can fill it.**
- 2. The life-sized vacuum inside their heart; only their life mission can fulfill it.**

To reach these goals, leaders must give up the pursuit of lesser things. C.S. Lewis wrote, "Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward...promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are halfhearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by an offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

## The Danger of Too Many Pursuits

*Ecclesiastes 2:1-11*

We can learn from Solomon's costly mistakes. The King of Israel desperately pursued several unrelated goals in a vain attempt to satisfy himself. Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 provides a good example of a leader who didn't know how to get what he wanted.

By the time Solomon wrote these words, he had reached a high level of success – but still felt empty. He couldn't put his finger on why fulfillment continued to escape him. Because he lacked focus, he searched high and low, experimenting with all kinds of goals, yet never achieved satisfaction. Sadly, he attempted to solve an inward problem with an outward solution.

The only axiom remains true: If you chase two rabbits, both will escape. This was certainly true of Solomon's futile attempt to reach his varied goals. (He pursued eight goals in Ecclesiastes 2 alone!) So, what can we learn from this leader about focus?

- 1. He pursued too many things in too short a time.**
- 2. He pursued the wrong goals to reach his desired outcome.**
- 3. His self-serving goals were all wrong.**
- 4. He despaired because he never identified what he really wanted.**

## A Checklist for Making Decisions

Solomon eventually did narrow his focus, but it took him a lifetime and an entire book to do so (see Eccl. 12). He finally determined what really mattered and what he really wanted.

How about you? Have you figured out your focus? How do you make major decisions? Do you have a way of determining your focus, based on what really matters or what really counts? Consider the following checklist as you make decisions about where to invest your time and energy. When faced with a decision, ask yourself:

1. **Is this consistent with my priorities?**
2. **Is this within my area of competence?**
3. **Can someone else do it better?**
4. **What do my trusted friends say?**
5. **Do I have the time?**

When you say “yes” to an opportunity, get ready to focus. Make to-do lists. Set your priorities. Avoid clutter. Pursue excellence, but avoid perfectionism. Question everything. Work to prevent procrastination. Control interruptions and distractions. Use the calendar. Narrow your wedge – don’t try to do everything. That means you’ll have to say no to some good things. And how can you say no gracefully?

1. **Say no to the proposition, not to the person.**
2. **Respond in terms that convey the best interests of the person who’s requesting your involvement.**
3. **Defer creatively; suggest an alternative.**

## **The Law of Timing: There's a Season for everything**

### **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**

Solomon knew quite a bit about the Law of Timing. He tells us there exists an appointed time for everything under heaven. Then he lists several examples: birth, death, planting, reaping, weeping, laughing, etc.

We don't control the timing of most events, the best we can do is to recognize the timing, and Ecclesiastes 3 teaches leaders several important lessons:

1. It is our responsibility to recognize God's timing, not to change it.
2. It is our responsibility to accept and cooperate with God's timing.
3. Our alignment with God's timing makes a great difference.
4. God has made everything appropriate in its time.
5. God has put eternity in our hearts, so we can trust God to communicate His timing.
6. We can do nothing better during our lifetime than to rejoice and do good.

## **Leadership Pitfalls**

### **Ecclesiastes 5:2-7**

Do you ever make promises to God? Scripture advises caution before we commit something to God-good advice for any decision a leader must make. Solomon describes three major pitfalls lying in wait for careless leaders:

1. Hasty Speech (vv2, 3) Leaders must listen as much as they speak. It takes more than words to fulfill dreams.
2. Empty Promises (vv4, 5) Leaders tend to say what others want to hear. Don't promise what you can't deliver.
3. Lame Excuses (vv6, 7) Leaders diminish their influence when they try to reverse a mistake with a lame excuse.

## **Servanthood: The Quality of a Leader Who Lasts**

### **Ecclesiastes 8:1-9**

Solomon reminds us about our leadership to leaders above us We are to submit to them, not because the person deserves it, but because the office deserves it and God decrees it.

And what about leaders in authority? Solomon also issues a warning. When leaders try to exercise authority without a servant's heart, they eventually hurt themselves. Leaders add value by serving others.

#### **Role of the Follower**

1. Submit to God-given authority
2. Trust God to accomplish His purpose.
3. Don't quit or become divisive.

#### **Role of the Leader**

1. Exercise authority with wisdom and caution
2. Recognize that no human controls all of life
3. Lead others by serving not bossing them.

## **The Law of Legacy: Your Work and Your Job**

### **Ecclesiastes 9:7-18**

Everyone on earth has a work to do, and it may be different from ones job. A job may be the task we get paid for at the moment, but a work is the task God gives us for our lives. Jobs come and go but the work remains. Your present job may be preparation for your ultimate work. The passage gives us direction for leaving the right legacy to those who come behind us.

- Work joyfully, since approval comes from God (vv.7-9)
- Work energetically, even if the results seem uncertain(vv.10-12)
- Work wisely, with the benefit of God's perspective (vv.13-18).

## **Generosity: Leaders Give Before They Receive**

### **Ecclesiastes 11:1-9**

Solomon knew a thing or two about wise investing. He counsels leaders to be generous, giving before they receive. And why should leaders initiate giving? Because they know they will eventually receive a hefty return. Wise leaders embrace the following truths about generosity:

1. Givers go first (v.1.)
2. Givers receive a return (v.1).
3. The return may not be immediate (v.1).
4. Giving does not keep us from misfortune (vv.2, 3).
5. If you do not give, you cannot expect a return (v.4).
6. The return will be in proportion to your giving (v.6)
7. The motive for giving is love for God (v.9).

## **Wise Words for Leaders on How to Finish Well**

### **Ecclesiastes 12:1-14**

Amazing how God can bring sunshine out of the cloudiest day. Isn't it? So it is with the Book of Ecclesiastes. An otherwise pessimistic and discouraging book ends, by God's grace, on a significant "up" note.

Chapter 12 concludes Solomon's meditation with some wise words that should direct every leader. They sound like the lecture of an experienced mentor attempting to counsel an emerging leader, trying to keep him or her from making some of the same mistakes he made. Consider Solomon's wisdom in this grand finale.

1. Don't lose sight of the big picture, especially when you are young (vv1-4).
2. Do what is right before it is too late to correct yourself (vv.5-8).
3. Use your words like tools to shepherd and add value to others (v.11).
4. Don't try to master everything in life, just what is important (v.12).
5. Trust and obey God, because He is the ultimate Judge (vv.13, 14).

## Initiative: One Earmark of a True Leader

*Jonah 2:10-3:10*

One earmark of a true leader is the display of initiative. By definition, leaders cannot wait for someone else to move; if they do, they are really followers, not leaders. Initiative requires an element of risk, faith, and foresight. When did you last initiate something significant? If you haven't pushed yourself lately and left your comfort zone, you may need a jump start in initiative.

### Why Do We Fail to Initiate?

It seems easier to run from a challenge than to step out and take a risk. When we initiate, we commit ourselves to a direction. We may feel uncertain about what the future holds. What if we change our minds? What if no one follows? What if we fail in front of our followers? We run from commitment and initiative for a variety of reasons.

| Reason  | Issue                     |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. We are afraid we will be unable to keep the commitment.  | 1. Low sense of security  |
| 2. We suspect we might find "greener grass" somewhere else. | 2. Paralyzed will         |
| 3. We expend time and energy only for personal gain.        | 3. No surrender           |
| 4. Our past makes trust difficult.                          | 4. Emotional baggage      |
| 5. We are lazy and unmotivated.                             | 5. Apathy and neutrality  |
| 6. We fear the risk of being rejected.                      | 6. Poor self-esteem       |
| 7. We fear the unknown and the unfamiliar.                  | 7. Low confidence         |
| 8. We do not want to lose our freedom.                      | 8. Entitlement philosophy |
| 9. We fear being different from others.                     | 9. Politically correct    |
| 10. We do not really know who we are.                       | 10. Gift and calling      |

Jonah had to learn initiative. It started with learning submission to God. Once we surrender His call on our life and leadership, we can step out to follow Him. We can take risks because our future lies in His hands. Once Jonah submitted to God's call, he saw all kinds of results. What happens when *we* accept God's call to initiate and commit?

1. We assume healthy personal responsibility (1:12).
2. We will likely see many come to faith in God (1:13-16).
3. We receive a God-given time and place to gain perspective (1:17).
4. We deepen our experience of worship and prayer (2:1-9).
5. We progress toward a new level of personal freedom (2:10).
6. We enjoy partnership with God (3:1-9).
7. We gain the satisfaction of seeing changed lives (3:10).

## **Character: Leaders Can't Give What They Don't Have**

*Micah 2:1-13*

The wicked leaders of Micah's day led out of convenience and expediency. They did what was right by *them*.

The Greek word for character is often translated "image." It means a notch, indentation, a sharpening, scratching, or writing on a stone or a coin. Consequently, character historically meant a distinctive mark impressed or formed on the inside of a person by an outside force. To better understand character, take a look at some common misconceptions about it:

1. **Character is not merely how a person acts; some can masquerade poor character.**
2. **Character isn't just what a person will ideally be in the future; that's called hope.**
3. **Character is not only what others see on the outside; it begins on the inside.**
4. **Character isn't limited to wisdom in evaluating others' behavior; that's judgment.**
5. **Character isn't only about discipline; I may be disciplined in one area and not in another.**

## **The Law of Influence: Woe to Leaders Who Abuse Power**

*Micah 3:1-12*

God pronounces a dark future for leaders who practice injustice and abuse their power to take advantage of others. God rebukes poor leaders and false prophets for their sins that impacted the entire land. God notes that these leaders had power and influence, but that they used it for their own purposes. Study the chapter to see what God hated so much about these abusive leaders:

1. **They destroyed people instead of developing them (v. 1-3).**
2. **They misled people into confusion, instead of leading them in a cause (v. 5-7).**
3. **They distorted justice instead of upholding justice for the common man (v. 9-10).**
4. **They took bribes for themselves instead of taking responsibility for the people (v. 11-12).**



# Vision: Leaders See It, Say It, and Show It Before They Seize It

*Micah 4:1-2*

All great leaders begin their journey with a vision. People have to buy into both the leader and the vision before they take the journey.

The prophet paints a picture of what life will be like in the future, during the last days – a glorious vision anyone could get excited about!

The “house of the Lord” was to be a strategic place (Mic. 4:1), an influential place (4:2), and an equipping place (4:2). In order for Micah to succeed, he had to possess and persuade the people concerning God’s vision for them. Then, he had to wait. Visions usually work like the birth of a baby; they take a long time in coming.

For any leader to successfully communicate a vision, they should know the vital signs of a successful vision:

1. **A clear picture – the ability to see the vision.**
2. **A committed people – the ability to transmit the vision.**
3. **A consistent prayer – the ability to intercede for the vision.**
4. **A constructive passion – the ability to work toward the vision.**
5. **A calm persistence – The ability to patiently wait for the vision.**

## Introduction to Mark

### *Jesus as a Servant-Leader*

The Book of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels. Written during a time of acute persecution, it cuts straight to the point, discussing Jesus' identity, the role of suffering, and the necessity of faith.

Mark, the author, was a disciple of Peter; therefore Peter's perspective appears repeatedly in the book. Mark paints a picture of Jesus as a Servant-Leader. He clearly and concisely portrays Christ as a compassionate model to follow. His fast-paced narrative describes the suffering Servant who engaged in consistent ministry to others through healing, teaching, feeding, encouraging, and restoring the broken.

It makes sense that Mark might maintain such a focus, since he needed such encouragement himself. He traveled with Paul and Barnabas across Asia Minor on their first missionary journey, but sometime during their ministry, Mark grew frightened and left the team to return home. Later, when he wanted to try it again, Paul considered him young and cowardly and rejected his participation. Barnabas, however, took Mark under his wing and mentored this young, emerging leader. Years afterward, Paul wrote from prison and asked that Mark be sent to him, since "he is useful to me for ministry" (2 Tim. 4:11). Paul changed his opinion because Mark had grown into a responsible leader.

Mark sees Jesus as the Ultimate Leader, just as did Matthew. Mark's picture, however, portrays Him not so much as the Messiah but as the model for all people. Jesus gave Himself to others. He spent Himself meeting physical needs (3:1-11); He spent time with His twelve staff members (3:13-14); He empowered those twelve for ministry (3:14-19); and He spent time teaching the people (3:23-29). More than anything, Mark teaches us that the Master considers relationship to be paramount. In this book we see Jesus embodying the Laws of Empowerment, Sacrifice, Connection, Priorities, Timing and Legacy.

## **God's Role in Mark**

God's role is best seen in Jesus, the incarnation of God, and in the Holy Spirit, the inspiration of God. Jesus demonstrated what God looks like as a human. Through Him we have a model to follow for our attitudes, our lifestyles, our conversations, our worldview, and our relationships. Through the Holy Spirit, we have a divinely inspired biography of this incarnated God. Through their work, we have a picture of the authority God exercises over both the spiritual and the physical realms.

## **Leader's in Mark**

Jesus, John the Baptist, Herod, Pontius Pilate, the chief priests in the Sanhedrin

## **Other People of Influence in Mark**

The twelve disciples, the women who followed Jesus, the Pharisees

## **Lessons in Leadership**

1. Effective leadership requires no worldly credentials.
2. Leaders who are change agents always transform the traditional paradigm.
3. Healthy leaders are first servants.
4. Effective leaders balance the need for solitude and socializing.
5. Good leaders provide security and confidence for their followers.
6. The greater the leader, the greater the humility and sacrifice required.
7. Principles serve effective leaders so leaders can effectively serve the people.

## Leadership Highlights in Mark

**John the Baptizer:** Good Leaders Prepare the Way for Change (1:1-8)

**The Law of Priorities:** Jesus Didn't Let Others Dictate His Agenda (1:32-38)

**Simon Peter:** Privileged to See What Most Others Couldn't (5:35-43)

**The Top Ten:** Leadership Principles of Jesus (8:34-38)

**The Law of Addition:** The Way Up is Down (9:33-10:16)

**The Law of the Picture:** Jesus Found a Model to Affirm (12:41-44)

**Pontius Pilate:** A Leader Who Refused to Take Responsibility (15:1-15)

**The Law of Legacy:** Jesus Turned His Ministry Over to His Disciples (16:15-16)

## Credibility: Luke's Authority to Write About Jesus

*Luke 1:1-4*

Luke felt the need to establish his credibility as a biographer for Jesus. He wasn't one of the twelve disciples, an eyewitness of Christ, or even a theologian. So he opens his book by explaining why he chose to write Jesus' story. Good leaders recognize the need to establish their credibility.

## Mary: Chosen Vessel for God's Highest Purposes

*Luke 1:26-38*

Mary had to know that sooner or later, *somebody* would be chosen as the vessel of God's very highest purpose. She must have realized that *somebody* would be chosen to bring the Messiah into the world, that *somebody* would be most blessed among all women.

But she couldn't have known that, from the beginning of time, God had His eye on *her* as that somebody. He had prepared her for bearing, then rearing, the One who would be the Savior of the world.

This woman of faith responded with alarm when an angel of the Lord told her she had found favor with God and would give birth to the baby Jesus. "How can this be?" she asked. "I'm a virgin!"

A legitimate question!

In short, the messenger answered, "With God, all things are possible. He has chosen you and honored you as the one to give birth to the Son of God."

And Mary's response? "I am the Lord's servant! May everything you have said come true."

There may be times when we as leaders ask, "How can this be?" or wonder how God could do something through us. But wise leaders will respond the way Mary did: "I am Your servant! May it be as You have said!"

## Listening: Jesus Did This to Connect with People

*Luke 2:42-52*

Even at 12 years of age, Jesus was listening and asking questions. He never grew out of the habit. Before ministering to needy people or telling them about the kingdom, He took the time to listen. He knew that to connect with people's hearts, He had to use His ears.

## Passion: John Served God with Gusto

*Luke 3:2-22*

The Best single word to describe John the Baptizer might be the word "passion." John's passion began even before he was born. He leaped in his mother's womb when Mary spoke of her pregnancy (Luke 1:41). His passion for God grew so great, that before he began his public ministry, he lived alone in the desert, wearing camel's hair and a leather belt and eating locusts and wild honey (Matt. 3:4). He was a radical and unafraid to let anyone know it.

John needed passion to fulfill his God-given calling. Every pioneer needs passion. Pioneers cannot be satisfied with mere maintenance, for they have nothing yet to maintain. They create from nothing. The common folk often view them as eccentric – but their passion attracts other pioneers. What gave *his* passion?

**1. He spent time in solitude.**

Before John began his public ministry, he lived in the wilderness and spent much time with God. He boiled with the presence of God and could hardly stay quiet.

**2. He felt consumed with his mission.**

John knew of Jesus' identity and His soon advent. John urgently tried to prepare the way for Him.

**3. He possessed a magnetic temperament and wiring.**

John is described as a voice crying out (Luke 3:4) and as an exhorter (3:18). Like a magnet, he repelled some and attracted others.

**4. He possessed a strong sense of justice.**

When people asked John what they should do, he told them to do justice (3:10-14). This hunger for justice drove him. He wouldn't sit still until he saw results.

5. **He saw things as black and white.**

Like others with prophetic gifts, John saw most issues as either black or white. While this sounds narrow to most pastors or businesspersons, this is part of what gave John his passion.

6. **He felt dissatisfied with anything but action.**

John was a doer. He didn't want people to merely talk about repentance and faith. He told the Pharisees they should bring forth fruit to prove their repentance.

Passion makes for an effective ministry. So how can you increase your passion?

1. **Take your temperature.** Get an honest assessment from coworkers: Are you passionate about what you do? You can't start a fire in your organization unless it first burns in you.
2. **Return to your first love.** Many leaders allow life to push them off track. Think back to when you first began your career. What drove you? What made you enthusiastic?
3. **Associate with people of passion.** Birds of a feather flock together. Hot coals stay hot when they remain in the fire. Find passionate people and let them rub off on you.

## Jesus and the Law of Addition: A Visual Aid about Adding Value

*John 13:1-17*

When you think of servanthood, do you envision it as an activity performed by relatively low-skilled people at the bottom of the flow chart? If you do, you have the wrong impression. Often we assume that if we serve, people will lower their view of us; that they will assume we possess the lowest position in the organization. But this is wrong. Think for a moment about the person who has served you more than anyone else in your life. Answers might vary, but most people will automatically respond, "My mother." Moms seem to be the greatest example of servanthood as they naturally serve the members of their family. Now here's another question: Do you have a lower view of your mother because she serves you, or a higher view of her? Most everyone would say a higher view. Why? Serving other people has exactly the exact opposite effect on them from what we think it will. People are drawn toward those who serve them sacrificially, not repelled by them. Service adds value to people. Servanthood is not about position or skill. It's about attitude. Leaders seek ways they can add value to others, and the primary way they do it is by serving them. In John 13, the Savior of the world exhibited that He was also the greatest Servant of all time. The story is familiar to many. When the disciples booked the upper room for the Passover feast, they forgot to secure the services of a servant to wash feet at the door. It was a custom to do this. Interestingly, as the disciples realized the servant was missing, none of them volunteered for the job. Instead, they argued over who was the greatest.

When Jesus saw this, He decided to make an object lesson out of it. So after supper, Jesus stripped down to a garment around his waist. He even looked the part of the servant! Then He took a basin of water and a towel and began washing his disciple's feet. As Jesus interacted with his men, several lessons about service and adding value arose.

### **Christ-like Servant-Leaders...**

1. *ARE motivated by love to serve others (v. 1-2).* Jesus' love was undeserved, unending, unconditional, and unselfish. It was not the worthiness or the merits of the disciples that drove Jesus to serve them. He wasn't expressing gratitude, but grace. Love made Him serve His disciples. Think about it: Jesus even washed the feet of Judas Iscariot, the man who would betray him and have him killed the next day.
2. *POSSESS a security that allows them to serve others (v. 3).* Jesus knew who He was, and He was secure enough to get down on the floor and wash His disciples' feet. He didn't have to prove anything.



3. In fact, He had nothing to prove, nothing to lose, and nothing to hide. The insecure are into titles. The secure are into towels. Jesus' security enabled Him to both stoop and stretch.
4. *INITIATE servant-leadership to others (v. 4-5)*. Jesus didn't wait for someone to clarify protocol. He saw a need and met it. No one else had volunteered for the foot-washing job that night – so Jesus made an object lesson out of the event. He started something that He hoped would be passed down from those twelve disciples to others (See John 13:12-15). Foot washing will never be in vogue. It will be done by leaders who are willing to pioneer an act of humility and sacrifice.
5. *RECEIVE servant-ministry from others (v. 6-7)*. A servant's heart exposes pride in others. Peter had a hard time letting Jesus serve Him. He still possessed a worldly mindset that assumed that someone of Jesus' caliber should never stoop to wash feet. Sometimes leaders must learn to let others serve them. Because they become so used to serving others, it is difficult for them to relax and receive. In this instance, Jesus was asking Simon Peter to sit and allow the Master to serve him.
6. *WANT nothing to hinder their relationship with God (v. 8-9)*. Peter moved from one extreme to the other. If Jesus was going to wash Him, he didn't want to miss anything He might do. He wanted Jesus to wash his entire body. Simon Peter exhibits a great attitude here. If Jesus was giving away, he wanted to receive all that Jesus had to give; he didn't want anything to stand between him and his Lord.
7. *TEACH servanthood by their example (v. 12, 15)*. Afterward, Jesus discussed the meaning of His foot washing. He reminded them that the Master and Lord had just washed their feet, so no position should prevent them from doing it for someone else. Jesus let them know that if the Master washed their feet, they ought to imitate Him. His model was to be reproduced. In fact, His example was much more powerful than a lecture about the principle of service. Actions speak more loudly than words.
8. *LIVE a blessed life (v. 16-17)*. Jesus reminded them they were blessed if they obeyed Him in this lifestyle. The greatest blessing follows those who step out by faith and do the opposite of what the world is doing. God blesses those who "go counter-cultural" and serve people with no thought of getting something in return from them. The return comes in the form of God's blessing.

When leaders serve, they add value to the people who receive their service. This value might be as simple as feeling worthwhile or special. It could be that the value is a resource we put in people's hands or a word of encouragement we speak to them. Whatever it is, people always receive something and feel better about themselves because of their leader. A good habit for a leader is to try to add value to everyone he or she meets; try to add something to their lives rather than take away. Seek to replenish and resource them to live the higher life God has called them to. This is what Jesus did, day in and day out. Whether He met up with a Samaritan woman in John 4, or a tax collector like Matthew or Zacchaeus, or a prostitute like Mary Magdalene – Jesus served them and added value to them. Maybe that's why people think so highly of Him. He served.

**Our Application Today...**

1. *Put others ahead of your agenda.*
2. *Develop the confidence and security to take risks.*
3. *Look for a need and take initiative.*
4. *Perform small acts anonymously.*
5. *Learn to walk slowly through the crowd.*
6. *Begin your day reflecting on the love you have for others in your life.*
7. *Develop a bias for action.*

## Courage: One Person with Courage is a Majority

*Acts 4:10-13*

In Acts 4 we see courage on display in the life of Peter and John. These two leaders were thrown in jail for preaching and for performing a miracle (v. 1-4). When their captors ask about their ministry, Peter boldly asserts that the name of Jesus, not their own talent, had healed the man (v. 10). He also explains that salvation comes through no other name (v. 12). What accounted for his boldness? Not his education, but his experience with Jesus (v. 13).

Leadership requires courage. All leaders need courage to:

1. *Seek the truth.* You never find yourself until you face the truth.
2. *Change.* Courage is the power to let go of the familiar.
3. *Express convictions.* Convictions help us to stand alone. The test of courage comes when we're in the minority.
4. *Overcome obstacles.* Whatever you do, someone will think you're wrong. Expect trouble. Project courage.
5. *Learn and grow.* You haven't learned until you step out, take a risk, and do something new.
6. *Take the high road.* There is no traffic jam on the second mile.
7. *Lead others.* Leadership is the expression of courage that compels others to do the right thing.

## **Peter and the Law of Priorities: Leaders Understand That Activity is Not Necessarily Accomplishment**

*Acts 6:1-7*

Leaders never grow to the point where they no longer need to prioritize. Good leaders keep prioritizing, whether they're leading a small group, pastoring a church, running a small business, or leading a billion-dollar corporation.

The things that bring the greatest personal reward light the fires in a leader's life. Nothing energizes a person the way passion does. Tim Redmond admitted, "There are many things that will catch my eye, but there are only a few things that will catch my heart."

Take some time to reassess your leadership priorities. Are you spread out all over the place? Or are you focused on the few things that bring the highest reward? The greatest success comes only when you focus your people on what really matters.

## Paul: The Most Influential Leader of the Early Church

*Acts 26:1-23*

From the very beginning, the Apostle Paul's life in Christ greatly influenced everyone around him. This persecutor-turned-apostle stood before kings, governors, and the religious power structures of the day. His enemies accused him, imprisoned him, beat him, and threatened him with death. He traveled untold thousands of miles and even survived a shipwreck. Through all of this, Paul never failed to vigorously and courageously defend and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul didn't become an influential leader because of his eloquence or because he possessed some special talent withheld from everyone else. Paul gained influence because, regardless of his circumstances – whether he sat in shackles during another interrogation, whether he lay in a cold prison cell or whether he roamed free to do his work – he stayed committed to one thing: preaching the name of Jesus.

Without question, Paul became the most influential leader of the early church. We continue to feel his influence to this day. By the world's standards – then *and* today – Paul must have appeared to be a fanatic. But all he did was obey God's call to influence the world around him. Wise leaders today would do well to follow Paul's example by purposefully taking the Word of God both to the body of Christ and to the unbelieving world.

## **Persuasion: Leaders Speak to Transform, Not Merely Inform**

*Acts 26:1-29*

In one of his most compelling court speeches, Paul addressed King Agrippa. Try to sense Paul's strategy here. Paul believed the best defense is a good offense and nearly converted King Agrippa. Observe how this leader attempted to persuade his audience:

1. He appeared relaxed, yet used animated gestures (v. 1).
2. He humbly thanked the king for allowing him to speak (v. 2).
3. He affirmed the king's knowledge and expertise (v. 3).
4. He admitted his life was an open book (v. 4).
5. He reminded them of his strict past (v. 5-8).
6. He identified with their opposition to the life he now embraced (v. 9-11).
7. He used a narrative to defend his changed life (v. 12-18).
8. He described his motives as pure and constructive (v. 18).
9. He conceded that he was obeying a divine vision (v. 19-20).
10. He explained that his obedience to God caused his trouble (v. 21).
11. He illustrated God's favor on his life (v. 22).
12. He affirmed that he preached the Scripture (v. 22-23).
13. He challenged them with reasonable and verifiable facts (v. 25).
14. He admitted the king knew these facts (v. 26).
15. He confronted the king directly with a question (v. 27).
16. He pled with them to obey God (v. 29).

## **Vision: The Leader as an Artist**

*Romans 4:1-22*

Communicators know the value of pictures. Paul paints a picture of the life he promotes, illustrating the life of faith using individuals such as Abraham, Sarah, and David. People need a point for their heads and a picture for their hearts.

# The Law of Empowerment: God Changes Us from the Inside Out

*Romans 5:12-21*

God's leadership is transformational. Paul carefully compares and contrasts Adam's work with Christ's and shows the fundamental changes God makes in us. He radically and permanently changes His people from the inside out.

God never demands conduct that He doesn't first empower His followers to achieve. Romans provides a virtual survey of New Testament theology and of God's empowering leadership:

1. **He liberates.** He frees us from the chains, stains, and pains of the past.
2. **He elevates.** He embraces us and lifts us up to reign with Him.
3. **He educates.** He gives us wise counsel and future direction.
4. **He compensates.** He fills areas where we are weak or lack competence.
5. **He motivates.** He is our source of vision, hope and purpose.
6. **He regenerates.** He transforms us to live on a higher level by His supernatural resources.
7. **He activates.** He commissions us to obey and move forward in His cause.

## **Team Building: Leaders are Brokers of Gifts**

*1 Corinthians 12:4-31*

Leaders aren't supposed to do all the work of the church, but are to effectively broker the talent on their team. Good teams use every gift and enjoy both unity and diversity. Consider Paul's philosophy of team building:

1. The team possesses a variety of gifts or positions, but pursues the same goal and God (v. 4-6).
2. Everyone has a contribution to make which benefits the team (v. 7).
3. God is the source of each gift, so He deserves the glory (v. 8-10).
4. God chooses who has what gifts, so we must not compete or compare (v. 11).
5. Team members are to function like the organs and muscles in a body (v. 12-14).
6. No team member is less important than another; all are necessary (v. 15-21).
7. Sometimes, the players who seem less important are actually more important (v. 22-24).
8. God's goal is team harmony and mutual care (v. 25-26).
9. Although members are equally important, they are meant to be diverse (v. 27-28).
10. We should not compete with each other, but complete each other (v. 29-31).

## **Leaders Who Celebrate Diversity Accomplish More**

*1 Corinthians 12:14-31*

Leaders must build a team spirit that celebrates diversity. Teams must share a common goal, but not the same gifts. Teams mature when the leader insists on diversity and celebrates what everyone does together. Former UCLA basketball coach John Wooden said, "Individuals win trophies, but teams win championships."



## Problem Solving: Healthy Confrontation and Resolution

### *Philemon 8-10*

The best way to solve many problems is to confront them. Sometimes those problems are people. Paul took great pains to confront Philemon about Onesimus. Consider these steps for confronting someone:

1. **Pray through your own anger.** Don't let emotion lead you. Wait until you can be objective.
2. **Initiate the contact.** Don't wait for the other person. God calls *us* to make things right.
3. **Begin with affirmation.** Encourage first, and then receive permission to talk candidly.
4. **Admit you have a problem.** Don't say it's the other person's problem; admit you are struggling.
5. **Bring up the issue and explain you don't understand what's happened.** Aim to clarify.
6. **Let the person respond.** After you lay out the issues, let the individual speak from his or her angle.
7. **Narrow the focus.** Identify and prioritize the issues. Go after one change at a time.
8. **Establish forgiveness and repentance, if needed.** Don't stop until change occurs.
9. **Compromise on opinions, not on principles.** Be flexible with everything except truth.
10. **Pray and affirm your love as you close.** Never let the person doubt God's love or yours.

## When Leaders are Challenged to Do the Difficult

### *Philemon 21*

Would Philemon forgive or erect emotional walls against Paul? He had done nothing wrong; in fact, *he* had been wronged. Fortunately, Philemon acted instead of reacting. Church history tells us Philemon responded with grace, received Onesimus back, and enabled him not only to participate in the church, but later to become a bishop!

## **Introduction to Hebrews**

### *A Solid Foundation for Faith in Christ*

Like Romans, the Book of Hebrews addresses both doctrine and duty in the Christian's life. An un-named author wrote the book to Jewish believers who needed a solid foundation for their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. They needed to learn that their new lifestyle didn't require circumcision, sacrifices, or other Old Testament traditions. This book provides a radical apologetic on Christianity.

Three profound leadership truths jump off the pages of this great book. First, the writer is not merely a teacher, but a leader attempting to convince Jewish believers to shift to new paradigms and to live in the freedom of grace. Every leader is a teacher in one sense, helping others to learn the ways of the organization and prepare for their job. But not every teacher is a leader! While no one can positively identify the author, one thing is clear: It was written by a strong, compelling leader determined to help his people change the way they thought and acted. New paradigms had to be embraced and fresh vision had to be cast to explain the superiority of the new paradigms.

Second, the book portrays Jesus not only as a wonderful Savior, but also as a superior Leader. Several times the book speaks of the superiority of Christ as compared to other Old Covenant leaders (Moses, Joshua, angels). The book can be divided into three sections. The first section talks about the superiority of Christ's Person (1:1-4:13); the second talks about the superiority of Christ's work (4:14-10:18); the third discusses the superiority of the Christian lifestyle (10:19-13:25). Hence, the book proclaims Jesus to be a superior Leader with a superior life.

## **God's Role in Hebrews**

God uses the Book of Hebrews to build a bridge between the Old and New Testaments. Hebrews quotes a wide variety of Old Testament passages to present a strong case for Jesus' superiority over everything that came before Him. God speaks clearly of the Person and work of Christ, and in this book provides us with a clear discourse on the need for a New Covenant and why faith is so central to His kingdom. God acts as both an Apologist and a Visionary, convincing readers to change and move with Him as He ushers in an age of grace.

## **Leaders in Hebrews**

The writer, Moses, Joshua, Melchizedek, Hebrew patriarchs, Jesus

## **Other People of Influence in Hebrews**

The Old Testament Israelites, the high priests

## **Lessons in Leadership**

1. As both God and man, Jesus had authority to lead.
2. Leaders gain credibility when they suffer with those they lead.
3. Good leaders build a sense of urgency, destiny, and family.
4. Leaders earn their right to be heard by serving others.
5. Effective leaders build a convincing case for why their people should change.

## **The Law of Navigation: Jesus is Our Forerunner**

*Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:19-20*

A forerunner was a small boat that navigated its way through dark waters, connecting a rope from the mother ship to the shore so the ship would dock without damage. Jesus is our forerunner, navigating unsafe waters ahead of us. He makes it possible for all His followers to make it home safely.

## **Teachability: Even Jesus Learned Obedience**

*Hebrews 5:8*

Although Hebrews describes Jesus as the superior Leader and perfect High Priest, He learned obedience through the things he suffered. Luke 2:52 tells us Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man. This growth didn't stop at age 12. All good leaders learn from their experiences, especially suffering.

## **The Law of Solid Ground: God Swore by Himself**

*Hebrews 6:13-18*

When God made a promise to Abraham, both took an oath. God not only kept His promise, but could find no better way to communicate His good faith than to use His own name. Leaders whose word is as good as a bond personify both integrity and trustworthiness.

## **Accountability: Leaders Will Endure a Stricter Judgment**

*James 3:1*

James informs us that leaders and teachers will receive a stricter judgment than other believers when they stand before God. Why? Because of their greater influence.

When a follower makes a mistake, he affects only himself and perhaps his family. When a leader makes a mistake, he affects the many who follow.

The Law of E.F. Hutton reminds us that when the real leader speaks, people listen. This can be both good news and bad news, depending on whether the leader's words are worth listening to! God promises that those in positions of influence will give account for how they use that influence.

In one sense, God will be a spiritual accountant, the heavenly CPA, calling leaders to answer for how they used the resources He gave them. At the judgment seat of Christ we will be required to give an account for what we did with our lives and our influence.

## James: Brother of Jesus, Leader of Men

*James 2:24, 26*

If you were trying to find an apple tree, you would look for a tall, woody plant with a fairly sturdy trunk, beautiful green foliage, and, of course, apples. Certain kinds of trees produce certain kinds of fruit.

It's like that with faith in God. James tells us that if we are looking for someone with saving faith, we should look for a person who voices belief in the words of Jesus Christ *and* whose actions back up his or her words. That is the governing principle of James' epistle, which describes religion that is practical, that produces change, and that works. Without those works, James tells us, such a person's faith isn't the genuine article.

James doesn't mean that our good works save us. He knew there is nothing we can do or say to add to what Christ has already done on the Cross. Rather, he means that we recognize genuine, saving faith by the works it produces in the life of the believer.

Godly leaders challenge us to embrace a faith beyond mere mental assent, more than emotionalism, more than words. They challenge us to examine our faith and determine if it is producing the kind of fruit James tells us it should.

## Self-Discipline: If You Can Tame the Tongue, You Can Tame Anything

*James 3:1-18*

What power our words contain! James focuses on the little muscle inside our mouths, called the tongue, a little thing that dispenses both blessing and cursing. Leaders must pay close attention, for they communicate often and carry great influence when they speak. James lists four functions of the tongue:

1. *Function One: to gauge (v. 1-2)*  
The tongue is a spiritual matter. If we can bridle it, we can bridle the whole body. It becomes the gauge for our maturity. Our faith will never register higher than our words.
2. *Function Two: to guide (v. 3-5)*  
The tongue is like a horse's bit, a ship's rudder, or kindling wood. It starts things in motion. If we can control it, we can guide our lives, just as a bit directs a horse or a rudder steers a ship.
3. *Function Three: to gird (v. 6-8)*  
The tongue is powerful. Like a huge fire, it can ruin or bless our entire lives. This power was meant to send us down the right path, not to kill us.
4. *Function Four: to guard (v. 9-18)*  
The tongue can reveal what sort of wisdom we harbor inside. A good tongue protects our integrity. James asks: Is yours a good guard or a bad one? Does it create peace or reveal hypocrisy?

# The Law of Intuition: Godly Wisdom vs. Worldly Wisdom

*James 3:13-18*

James speaks of two kinds of wisdom: the wisdom from above and the wisdom from below. Good leadership intuition always springs from the wisdom from above. Notice the following differences:

## **Wisdom from Above**

1. Gentle and generous
2. Speaks the truth
3. Pure and organized
4. Results in peace
5. Reasonable
6. The fruit of love and mercy

## **Wisdom from Below**

1. Selfishly ambitious and jealous
2. Speaks lies and deceives
3. Disorderly and demonic
4. Results in disharmony
5. Self-centered
6. The fruit of strife and competition



# Introduction to 1 Peter

## *Lessons and Principles for Leaders*

Simon Peter, one of Jesus' own disciples, wrote 1 and 2 Peter to encourage believers who had fallen prey to the persecution of the Roman Empire. He sent his letter to all five provinces of Asia Minor.

As a recipient of persecution for taking a stand himself, Peter could speak with credibility and conviction. Acts 5 describes how he suffered for his faith; Acts 12 reports his imprisonment. Eventually, the Romans crucified Peter upside down. Tradition says he told his executors that he felt unworthy to die in the same manner as his Lord, so they hung him upside down instead of right side up.

Peter filled his letter with lessons and principles for leaders; Jesus had groomed him to be a leader. Peter began his journey as a crude, brash, outspoken, but influential individual. By the time Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon His church as reported in Acts 2, Peter had become wise, winsome, convictional, and even more influential. Consider some of the lessons he learned along the way.

First, *find your security in the Lord*. Peter didn't embrace this lesson at first. He consistently projected his self-worth and drew his value from the attention others gave him. He teaches that those "who once were not a people but are now the people of God." He drives home that God chose us to be a royal priesthood (2:9-10).

Second, *leaders must recognize that suffering and opposition come with the territory*. Peter writes to Christians who have begun to suffer opposition for their convictions. By the time he wrote, Peter had suffered opposition for many years. He knew what it meant to be rebuked, beaten, arrested, imprisoned, and mocked.

## **God's Role in 1 Peter**

God plays the role of encourager. Leaders can come away from this book knowing that they are not alone in their sacrifice and suffering. Their cause has not gone unnoticed, so long as it lies within the boundaries of the kingdom of God.

God exhorts leaders to be holy and humble; to be patient and persistent; and to be servants and shepherds. The book unflinchingly depicts the harsh realities of life. Leadership can be a thankless job. But any leader can receive hope and strength from the insights and instructions God provides. When we humble ourselves, we receive God's power.

## **Leaders in 1 Peter**

Peter, elders and under-shepherds, government authorities

## **Other People of Influence in 1 Peter**

Husbands and wives

## **Lessons in Leadership**

1. If leaders will humble themselves, God will exalt them.
2. A leader's identity must be found in Christ, not in the corporate ladder.
3. Opposition and struggle are part of the leadership territory.
4. Leaders who practice holiness and humility receive God's hope and help.
5. Spiritual leaders are to be models, ministers, mentors, and managers.

## Winning with People

A faith-based leader who desires to lead in a way that pleases God cannot separate healthy leadership from healthy relationships. Relationships are the currency of God's kingdom. In the book *Winning with People* there are several "people principles" that have helped leaders connect with people over the centuries. They are timeless and universal. Here are some biblical examples of each principle:

1. ***The Lens Principle: Who we are determines how we see others.***  
Example: Nabal (1 Samuel 25:1-42)
2. ***The Mirror Principle: The first person we must examine is ourselves.***  
Example: David (2 Samuel 12)
3. ***The Pain Principle: Hurting people hurt people and are easily hurt by them.***  
Example: King Saul (1 Samuel 18:6-29)
4. ***The Hammer Principle: Never use a hammer to swat a fly off of someone's head.***  
Example: Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 10:1-17)
5. ***The Elevator Principle: We can lift people up or take them down in our relationships.***  
Example: Jonah and the people of Nineveh (Jonah 4:1-11)
6. ***The Big Picture Principle: The entire population of the world, with one minor exception, is composed of others.***  
Example: Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire (Daniel 4:1-37)
7. ***The Exchange Principle: Instead of putting others in their place, we must put ourselves in their place.***  
Example: Abigail and David's army (1 Samuel 25:18-35)
8. ***The Learning Principle: Each person we meet has the potential to teach us something.***  
Example: Naaman and his servant (2 Kings 5:1-14)
9. ***The Charisma Principle: People are interested in the person who is interested in them.***  
Example: Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:1-42)
10. ***The Number 10 Principle: Believing the best in people usually brings the best out of people.***  
Example: Barnabas and John Mark (Acts 15:36-39; 2 Timothy 4:11)
11. ***The Confrontation Principle: Caring for people should precede confronting people.***  
Example: Nathan and David (2 Samuel 12)
12. ***The Bedrock Principle: Trust is the foundation of any relationship.***  
Example: Mordecai and Esther (Esther 4:6-17)
13. ***The Situation Principle: Never let the situation mean more than the relationship.***  
Example: Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 42:1-28; 45:1-15)

- 14. The Bob Principle: When Bob has a problem with everyone, Bob is usually the problem.**  
Example: Herod and the people of Israel (Acts 12:1-23)
- 15. The Approachability Principle: Being at ease with ourselves helps others be at ease with us.**  
Example: Daniel in Babylon and Persia (Daniel 2:1-28); 5:13-14)
- 16. The Foxhole Principle: When preparing for battle, dig a foxhole big enough for a friend.**  
Example: Solomon (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)
- 17. The Gardening Principle: All relationships need cultivation.**  
Example: Joseph, Potiphar, and Pharaoh (Genesis 39:1-41:16)
- 18. The 101 Percent Principle: Find the 1% we agree on and give it 100% of our effort.**  
Example: Paul in Athens (Acts 17:22-31)
- 19. The Patience Principle: The journey with others is slower than the journey alone.**  
Example: Moses and the people of Israel (Exodus 17:1-7; 32:1-35)
- 20. The Celebration Principle: The true test of relationships is not only how loyal we are when friends fail, but how thrilled we are when they succeed.**  
Example: Barnabas and Saul (Acts 9:22-28; 13:1-52)
- 21. The High Road Principle: We go to a higher level when we treat others better than they treat us.**  
Example: Abraham and Lot (Genesis 13:7-18) / David and King Saul (1 Samuel 24:1-22)
- 22. The Boomerang Principle: When we help others, we help ourselves.**  
Example: Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1-5)
- 23. The Friendship Principle: All things being equal, people will work with people they like; all things not being equal, they still will.**  
Example: David's mighty men (1 Samuel 22:1-23:29)
- 24. The Partnership Principle: Working together increases the odds of winning together.**  
Example: Paul, Julius, and the stormy journey (Acts 27)
- 25. The Satisfaction Principle: In great relationships, the joy of being together is enough.**  
Example: Jesus and the twelve disciples (John 15:9-17)