

Chapter 42: Personal and Professional Christian Leadership

Life Application Verses:

1 Timothy 3: 1-4. It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity.

Leadership is one of those things we hear so much about that we often ‘tune out’ when it’s time to consider it and how it applies to our lives. There are so many books ‘out there’ that define, discuss, and dissect leadership, we sometimes avoid even thinking about it—almost as much as we detest and avoid surveys! Are you like this? Or, do you consider yourself to be a leader? Well, my brother or sister, I am sorry to inform you that you are in a position of leadership from the time you get up until you go to bed, and even in your dreams or restless sleep, you are a leader. The truth is: you are a leader and a follower. As a Christian, I think of myself first and foremost as a follower of God in and through The Son of God, Christ Jesus, as I study His Word for guidance; **only** after considering followership before God, do I think of areas of leadership at work, home, church, and other areas of a Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good life.

In Table 1, Christian Leadership Defined, Discussed, and Dissected (NOT ANOTHER ONE!!!), I provide an acrostic of leadership, what it means to me, a definition of its applications, and then in the remainder of this chapter, I will do a bit of further definition, discussion, and dissection (NOT MORE OF THEM!!!). Yep, afraid so. There are so many definitions of leadership, it’s really hard to know which one is the best one to use; however, if you find one that you think helps you understand what it means to be a leader, I would grab ahold of it and apply it to your life. Better yet, what does God say about leadership? In the Life Application Verses, God directed the writer (Paul) to indicate what it meant to be an overseer. Webster defines an overseer as a supervisor or superintendent. In 1 Timothy 3: 1-4, the verse starts out by stating that “It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer [supervisor or superintendent], it is a fine work he desires to do.” In other words, it is a fine work if a man desires to be a leader, overseer, supervisor, superintendent, head of household, Bible Study Leader, Teacher, Father, Mother, Policeman, etc., etc., and etc. Because we all hold

some position, somewhere in life—we are an overseer. You might be the overseer/leader of a group, design team, Men’s or Women’s Bible Study Group, 6th Grade Boys Soccer Team, working mother and/or father, Woodmere Community Block Captain, etc., etc., and etc. Have you begun to see a pattern developing in these overseers/leaders? They are **YOU** and they are **ME!** If you have children, you are an overseer of those precious lives; if you have an immediate and extended family, yep, overseer it is! *You are by design intended to be a Christian Leader.* Take a gander at Table 1 and see if you “see yourself” in it...if not, why not?

Table 1: Christian Leadership Defined, Discussed, and Dissected

L	Leader	A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.	John Maxwell
E	Example	Example is leadership.	Albert Schweitzer
A	Actionable Application	6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. 7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly; If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.	Romans 12: 6-8 John Quincy Adams
D	Determination	Come work for the Lord. The work is hard, the hours are long, and the pay is low, but the retirement benefits are out of this world.	Anonymous
E	Eternal Life	For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.	John 3: 16
R	Respect	People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.	John Maxwell
S	Servant	Servanthood does not nullify leadership; it defines it. Jesus does not cease to be the Lion of Judah when He becomes the lamblike servant of the church.	John Piper
H	Humble	But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant.	Jesus Christ
I	Integrity	According to Scripture, virtually everything that truly qualifies a person for leadership is directly related to character. It’s not about style, status, personal charisma, clout, or worldly measurements of success. Integrity is the main issue that makes the difference between a good leader and a bad one. We put men into pulpits because they have degrees. But you can have 32 of them and still be frozen!	John MacArthur Leonard Ravenhill
P	Perspective	He who thinketh he leadeth and hath no one following him is only taking a walk.	Unknown.

As noted in Table 1, what traits do you find yourself in need of to do your job? Let's return to the Life Application Verses to help us understand the Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good characteristics of what it means/requires for us to be Christian Leaders. "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity." Wow—this is an impressive list of items for application to our daily lives. How many times a day, as a parent, do we need to be gentle or prudent or above reproach or helping our children to understand discipline, love, and sharing? How many times a day as an employee do we need to be good stewards with our time, faithful to our spouses, wise about how we spend our employer's time, above reproach, respectable to self and others, hospitable to customers, able and willing to teach, not addicted to wine or so many other addictive things in life, and/or free from the love of money?

In this chapter, I want you to consider Christian Leadership from both the personal and professional aspects of your life. There is a fuzzy-delimiter between the two if you have a family and work or if you only work at home as a 'domestic engineer.' The personal is mainly that associated with your family and your private lives; the professional is, of course, that area of your life outside the home where you go each day to 'work and earn a paycheck' (and even in the home as you might need to be professionally developed to set up phone messages, operate a computer, etc.). Both of these, however, are about Christian Leadership. The Heavenly Minded aspect of this topic is to remember that we are not here on Earth to sit down, do nothing, and wait for God to pick us up and take care of our every whim. Heavenly Minded is to understand that God expects us to be leaders in our homes, at our jobs, in our communities, and in our churches. The Earthly Good is to apply these characteristics as indicated in Table 1. As a side note: personal development is to study Scripture, lead your family by reading and studying Christian-based books or software on family leadership, study to lead a 6th Grade boys Bible Study group, and so forth. Professional Development is more in line with employment where an employer provides funds and time to attend 'professional development activities.' Even in Professional Development, God is your Guide and your

Christian Leadership must be the overarching focus of your outcomes. If we had space in the context of this book, I would deal with each leadership trait in detail. For the present time, let it suffice to identify the Faith-based overseer in the *Statement of Christian Leadership* below:

Christian Leadership is to recognize that we are by God's Design a **Leader** in this life, wherever He may place us or in whatever circumstance we may find ourselves. In all circumstances and events in life, we are to be an **Example** of a Christian Leader by how we conduct ourselves in Mind, Spirit, and Body. It is our responsibility before God to demonstrate **Actionable Application** in every outcome of our life so that our actions Glorify God with Heavenly Minded **Determination** derived from our knowledge of **Eternal Life** in Christ Jesus, The Son of God. As Christian Leaders, we must **Respect** life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all people. It is imperative that as Christian Leaders, we live each day with a **Servant** heart, **Humble** before God, yet bold before the Throne of Grace and Mercy. The most important Earthly Good guiding principle is that we must hold fast to **Integrity** in our relationship to God, family, fellow Christians, and those who need Salvation in Jesus Christ. Christian Leadership requires that we maintain a **Perspective** of our role in personal and professional development so that we should not begin to think more or less of ourselves than we ought to before God.

There is a new book (at this writing), © 2013, from Zondervan, titled: *NIV Leadership Bible*. It includes a complete English translation of the New International Version (NIV) Bible. As part of its new format and instruction, the back cover includes the following statements:

1. The complete text of the bestselling modern-English translation, the New International Version (NIV) Bible;
2. Book introductions that underscore key leadership concepts in every book of the Bible;
3. Home pages and daily studies that offer 52 weeks of studies on topics important to every leader;
4. Insights that reinforce your understanding of biblical leadership throughout the text;
5. Character profiles that show you how the personal attributes and decisions of biblical characters affected their relationships with others [and God];
6. Topical index that directs you to the Bible passages that are most relevant to your specific concerns;
7. Character Profile Index & Bibliography.

While I am not a salesman of this text, I find it an amazing read. Here's why. Being a Christian in the sight of God is first our acceptance of Christ as the Son of God and the gift of

Salvation in Jesus. Next, we as followers of Christ, live in a world where there is hostility towards our Faith in God. In spite of these dangers (yes, in today's world there are dangers of various sorts), we are not to be simply followers in our society and led around by-the-hand and told what to do and how to be silent in our businesses and organizations in our nation and globally. We are to be leaders in our world, making a positive difference in the lives of others—whether at home, on the job, or in the Fields of Harvest. Maybe you haven't 'seen a burning bush' in your backyard (I might faint right out if I did), **but God's Word is that 'burning bush.'** He tells us how to live, what we should do, and the Holy Bible is not an option—it is a prerequisite for our entire life! Whether we are learning or studying for personal or professional reasons, the Holy Bible is our guide. We have examples of those in the Scriptures who were leaders; they were not all positive role models at all times of the day or for the entirety of their lives. Neither are we! That DOES NOT EXCUSE us from being Christian Leaders in our lives. Even if you work for someone else or you own your own business or you are a homemaker or you have one of those SOHO (Small Office, Home Office) businesses, as a dedicated follower of God in Christ, be a leader and make that positive difference in those around you—in business, relationships, Christian groups, community service, and so forth.

Should you wear a badge to Church next Sunday that reads: I AM A BOLD LEADER—GOD SAYS SO. I'm not sure that would be a good idea and I am pretty sure that's not the same form of humble—but bold leader—God had in mind. The 'badge of honor' you desire is from God Himself. You want to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Servant? I thought we were talking about Christian Leadership? Yes, we are and to be a good leader, you **must be an excellent servant.** You must be faithful before God in all that you do. Is this a tall order for us to be faithful to God in all things? Yes. Do we have a choice? Yes. But you should know that choice due to Free Will often comes at a price. When we absolve ourselves of our responsibility to lead our families, be leaders in our communities, or seek to be an overseer at our places of work, the negatives are that we leave a vacuum. I don't know about you, but have you ever looked in one of those cylinders or bags in your vacuum cleaner? *Ugh times 100!* It picks up dirt, dust, critters, things you can't even identify—in other words, if you activate a vacuum, it WILL BE FILLED! What it will be filled with is the question; thus, as Christian Leaders,

we have to be involved in our workplaces, in our homes, and with our families. Revisit the Life Application Verses. It notes that if a man aspires to a position of overseer, this is a good thing. I see the Life Application Verses and so many other verses as informing us that God desires and needs Christian Leaders—in public and private service. Think about what this really means to you. Whether you are going to the grocery store to purchase food or design a building, the decisions you make are forms of leadership. At the grocery store, did you purchase more healthy food than junk items? Choosing good food over unhealthy food is a deliberate act of situational leadership to promote a healthy family. If you design a building and someone suggests cutting corners, you refuse because Christian Leaders follow the Rules of Integrity as stipulated by God throughout His Holy Word. Follow God’s leadership and Pray to know His Will in our lives.

A Question of Curiosity:

IF you are a person who has never considered that you are a Christian Leader in your Personal and Professional life, is it too late to start? And God says _____.

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“In the founding era of our country, it was not organized religion but personal faith, that brought focus and unified the early leadership—maybe an unspoken faith in God, and certain values that came with that faith. So in that sense, we cannot discount, in my judgment, religious faith in politics.”

~ Billy Graham, Newsweek, Aug. 14, 2006 ~

"I have wondered at times what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U.S. Congress."

~ Ronald Reagan ~

I was reminded of this one summer in college when I volunteered to help students into the dorms. Lugging boxes up the stairs for the 50th time, I bumped into a middle-aged man in shorts and a dirty T-shirt. He was breathing heavily and let out a grunt. I peered over my boxes to apologize and saw the man’s face -- it was David Black. When I wonder what it means to be a man of no reputation, the image that comes to mind is my college president carrying boxes in a soaked T-shirt, meeting new students as their servant before he was introduced to them as their president. It reminds me there is no system of the world inside which we can’t walk with Jesus in the practice of subversive service.

~ Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove ~

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