

Leadership Lessons— Seven Major Lessons Identified

From comparative study of over 1200 leader case studies, seven major leadership lessons have emerged. These leadership lessons are listed below with a brief explanation, a value suggested which flows from the lesson, reasons why important, a Biblical and a contemporary example and some suggestions for follow-up.

1. Lifetime Perspective

Effective Leaders View Present Ministry in Terms Of A Lifetime Perspective.

Explanation: Leaders who recognize the big picture for their lives have a jump start on surviving present circumstances which may be both negative and overwhelming. A leader needs to recognize the notion of developmental phases over a lifetime and boundaries transitioning between them. He/she needs to understand the shaping activity of God over a lifetime. If such a leader also knows the basic goal toward which God is moving, he/she can respond to present day shaping for maximum benefit. In general, a leader knowing what it means to finish well, determines to have that for his/her life. That leader recognizes the barriers to finishing well: 1. lack of financial integrity, 2. sexual impropriety, 3. abuse of power, 4. family related problems, 5. problems with pride, 6. plateauing. That leader recognizes the factors that will promote a good finish: 1. a learning posture, 2. mentoring help, 3. renewal experiences, 4. disciplines, 5. a lifelong perspective. A leader thus armed can perceive what is happening today from a sovereign mindset. In short, it allows the leader to go through present happenings because of the hope of the future and knowledge that God is in them.

Value Suggested: A leader ought to gain perspective on what is happening today in his/her life by interpreting it in the light of his/her whole lifetime and God's overall purposes in it.

Why Important: 1) Few leaders finish well. Perspective is one of the enhancements that can help a greater number of leaders finish well. 2) Making it through tough times in leadership may well depend on gaining perspective. Without perspective, a longer range viewpoint on what is happening, few leaders will persevere through hard times. 3) A critical difference between leaders and followers is perspective. The difference between leaders and more effective leaders is better perspective. Effective leaders will be broadening their perspective.

Biblical Examples: Jesus, Paul

Contemporary Example: Billy Graham

Suggestions for Follow-Up: Read Clinton's **The Making of a Leader** for a popular treatment of a lifetime perspective on a leader's development. See also the *Article Time-Lines—Defined for Biblical Leaders*. See Graham's autobiography, **Just As I Am**.

2. Learning Posture

Effective Leaders Maintain A Learning Posture Throughout Life.

Explanation: The ability to learn from the Bible, current events, people, reading, ministry experience, and other sources in such a way as to affect one's leadership is fundamental to being an effective leader. Flexible leaders usually do have a good learning posture (has to do with an attitude, a mental stance toward learning). Inflexible leaders are not usually active learners. God will bring into a leader's life necessary information and wisdom to meet leadership situations if that leader is open to learning. Leadership is dynamic. Changing situations demand that a leader be constantly learning. One of the five major factors identified with leaders who finish well is a good learning posture.

Value Suggested: A leader ought to be continually learning from a wide variety of sources in order to cope effectively with life and ministry.

Why Important: A good learning posture is one of the enhancements toward a good finish. It is also the key to ministry insights, paradigm shifts, and other leadership lessons that can make the difference in effective on-going leadership.

Biblical Examples: Daniel, the classic Old Testament leader, models an exemplary learning posture. The Apostle Paul does the same in the New Testament.

Contemporary Examples: Watchman Nee (Chinese church/para church leader who died in prison in the early 70s); A. J. Gordon, Baptist pastor in Boston area and developer of one of the first flagship churches in the U.S. (1836-1895). Examples from today include Phil Yancey, Hans Finzel and Robertson McQuilkin.

Suggestions for Follow-Up: See Kinnear's book on Nee, **Against The Tide**. See **For Further Study Bibliography**, Clinton's chapter 3 on A.J. Gordon in **Focused Lives**.

3. Spiritual Authority

Effective Leaders Value Spiritual Authority As A Primary Power Base.

Explanation: Spiritual authority is the right to influence conferred by followers because of their perception of spirituality in a leader. It is that characteristic of a God-anointed leader which is developed upon an experiential power base that enables him/her to influence followers through: 1) Persuasion, 2) Force of modeling, and 3) Moral expertise. Spiritual authority comes to a leader in three major ways. First as leaders go through deep experiences with God they experience the sufficiency of God to meet them in those situations. They come to know God more intimately by experiencing Him. This experiential knowledge of God and the deep experiences with God are part of the experiential acquisition of spiritual authority. A second way that spiritual authority comes is through a life which models godliness. When the Spirit of God is transforming a life into the image of Christ, those characteristics of love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance carry great weight in giving credibility. They show that the leader is consistent inwardly and outwardly. A third way that spiritual authority comes is through gifted power. When a leader demonstrates gifted power in ministry —that is, a clear testimony to divine intervention in the ministry—there will be spiritual authority. While all three of these means of developing spiritual authority should be a part of a leader, it is frequently the case that one or more of the elements dominates. Ideally spiritual authority is the major influence means used with mature followers. Other power bases such as coercion, inducement, positional, and competence may have to be used as well as spiritual authority because of lack of maturity in followers. Mature followers will recognize spiritual authority. Leaders who command and demand compliance are not using spiritual authority.

Values Suggested: 1) Leaders should respond to God's processing in their life so as to let spiritual authority develop as a by-product of the processing. 2) Leaders ought to recognize and use spiritual authority whenever they can in their ministry.

Why Important: Leaders who rely on privilege and power associated with a position tend to abuse power in their ministry. Spiritual authority counters the abuse of power. Spiritual authority honors God's maturity processes in followers.

Biblical Examples: Moses, Jesus, Paul

Contemporary Examples: Henrietta Mears, Bible teacher/ entrepreneur (1890-1963); Watchman Nee (Chinese church/para church leader who died in prison in the early 70s). John Wimber was a leader who especially had spiritual authority because of gifted power.

Suggestions for Follow-Up: See **For Further Study Bibliography**, Clinton's chapter 8 on Mears in **Focused Lives** and teaching by Nee on this subject, **Spiritual Authority**.

4. Dynamic Ministry Philosophy

Effective Leaders Who Are Productive Over A Lifetime Have A Dynamic Ministry Philosophy.

Explanation: An unchanging set of core values and a changing set of peripheral values comprise a dynamic ministry philosophy. Such a ministry philosophy expands due to a growing discovery of giftedness, changing leadership situations, and greater understanding of the Scriptures. A leader's discovery of his/her giftedness and development of the same takes place over 10 to 15 years of ministry. Continued discovery will bring about issues of ministry philosophy not previously seen or anticipated. The same is true of the Scriptures. A leader will continue to master the Word over a lifetime. New input will lead to new philosophical values which will add to, clarify, or even replace earlier philosophical values which now become less important. Finally, leaders will usually move through three or four very different ministry situations over a lifetime. Each new situation will demand discovery of new leadership values. But a leader will also have some core values which continue throughout all phases. This core will also expand as new critical leadership values are added. But that leader will also have numerous periphery leadership values which will change, come and go, over a lifetime.

Value Suggested: A leader ought to identify core and peripheral leadership values under girding his/her leadership philosophy and be ready to adapt and changes these over a lifetime.

Why Important: Ministry essentially flows out of being. A conglomerate of factors make up one's being including (but not limited to): intimacy with God, personality, gender, giftedness, character, and values (convictions) learned via ministry experience. One's ministry philosophy emerges from those values. Hence, if we are to operate in terms of who God has made us to be, we must increasingly become explicitly aware of the values that under gird our leadership.

Biblical Examples: Joseph, Habakkuk (generally prophetic ministry demands a ministry that is value based), Paul.

Contemporary Examples: G. Campbell Morgan, British pastor and international Bible teacher (1863-1945), Warren Wiersbe, Billy Graham.

Suggestions for Follow-Up: See *Article, Value Driven Leadership*. See also **For Further Study Bibliography**, Clinton's chapter 5 on Morgan in **Focused Lives**.

5. Leadership Selection And Development

Effective Leaders View Leadership Selection And Development As A Priority Function In Their Ministry.

Explanation: God raises up future leaders in present ministries. A major responsibility of Christian leaders is to partner with God in the on-going selection and development of leaders. The processes of identifying and developing leaders is both a means and an end. It is an end in itself by producing new leaders. But it is also a means for stimulating life in the ministry that is doing it. Emerging leaders also bring new life to a ministry. Strong leaders usually attract emerging leaders to themselves who are potentially like-gifted. Leaders should recognize this pattern and proactively respond to it by developing those potential leaders so attracted. Leaders who fail to recognize, select, and develop emerging leaders in their ministry miss out on personal growth that comes through this experience. They may almost be guaranteeing a weak future ministry that is overly dependent upon themselves.

Value Suggested: Leaders ought to be involved in the selection and development of emerging leaders.

Why Important: No work of God can last long that is not producing new leaders. Any work of God is only one generation away from nominality and mediocrity. New leadership emerging offsets nominality and plateauing ministry.

Biblical Examples: See Jesus ministry in the Gospels. See Paul's ministry. Both of these leaders selected and developed leaders.

Contemporary Examples: Robert Jaffray (1873-1945), Christian Missionary and Alliance missionary to Indo-China and Indonesia. Howard Hendricks. Paul Stanley. Alan Andrews.

Suggestions for Follow-Up: See **For Further Study Bibliography**, Clinton's chapter 6 on Jaffray in **Focused Lives**.

6. Relational Empowerment

Effective Leaders See Relational Empowerment As Both A Means And A Goal Of Ministry.

Explanation: Personal relationships between a leader and followers allow for interdependence in the body. Leaders need the feedback that comes through personal relationships with their followers. Leaders should develop body life (reciprocal living—the one-another commands) as a major goal. This kind of behavior in a group provides a base from which all kinds of development can occur. For example, personal relationships will develop which will lead to mentoring. Mentoring is probably the best informal means for developing followers and especially emerging leaders. It is in the context of close, accountable, personal relationships that younger leaders can be encouraged and truly empowered.

Value Suggested: A leader ought to view personal relationships as a Biblical and critical priority in ministry both for developing ambiance for growth and for empowering others via mentoring methods.

Why Important: Mentoring is one of the most appropriate means of developing followers and challenging emerging leaders. Modeling, one form of mentoring, is one of the most important influence means. Personal relationships form the seedbed for both mentoring and modeling.

Biblical Examples: Jesus, Paul

Contemporary Examples: Henrietta Mears (1890-1963); Dawson Trotman (1906-1956), founder of the Navigators, Howard G. Hendricks, Paul Stanley, Bill Hull.

Suggestions for Follow-Up: See **Articles** *Reciprocal Living—The One-Another Commands*; *Paul the Mentor*; *Mentoring—An Informal Training Model*; *Paul—Modeling As An Influence Means*. See **For Further Study Bibliography**, Clinton's chapter 8 on Mears in **Focused Lives**. See Skinner's book, **Daws—The Story of Dawson Trotman, Founder of the Navigators**. See Clinton and Clinton, **The Mentor Handbook**. See Stanley and Clinton, **Connecting**.

7. Sense Of Destiny

Effective Leaders Evince A Growing Awareness Of Their Sense Of Destiny.

Explanation: A sense of destiny is an inner conviction arising from an experience (or a series of experiences) in which there is a growing awareness that God has His hand on a leader in a special way for special purposes. This typically happens along a three-fold destiny pattern: destiny preparation, destiny revelation, and destiny fulfillment. That is, a leader is usually unaware of preparation items as they happen, but in retrospect can reflect and see how God was preparing for a destiny. The sense of destiny deepens as God begins to unfold more clearly life purpose, role, and strategic guidance. And finally some or all of the destiny is fulfilled. Leaders become gradually aware of a destiny with God as He continues to shape them over a lifetime.

Value Suggested: A leader ought to be sensitive to destiny shaping activities in his/her past and present, and be anticipating their future implications. This awareness informs decision making reflecting partnership with God toward fulfilling that destiny.

Why Important: No Biblical leader greatly used by God failed to have a strong sense of destiny. A strong sense of destiny will buttress a leader to persevere toward a strong finish.

Biblical Examples: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Jesus, Paul. Joseph, Moses, and Paul vividly demonstrate the threefold pattern of destiny preparation, destiny revelation and destiny fulfillment.

Contemporary Examples: Samuel Logan Brengle (1860-1936), Salvation Army Stalwart, Bill Bright.

Suggestions for Follow-Up: See **Article** *Destiny Pattern*. See **Glossary** for *destiny pattern; destiny processing; sense of destiny*. See also these same concepts in **Clinton's Leadership Emergence Theory Manual**. See Clarence Hall's work, **Samuel Logan Brengle, Portrait of a Prophet**. See **For Further Study Bibliography**, Clinton's chapter 4 on Brengle in **Focused Lives**.

Conclusion

Not all these lessons appear in a specific example of an effective leader. Some leaders exemplify three or four of them, others five or six and in a few cases all seven. But they are certainly goals for which to strive. It is not clear whether these lessons are by-products of effective leaders or causes of them being effective. Hopefully they are some of both so that if we deliberately try to put these in our lives they will improve our effectiveness.

Note: All articles listed in the Suggestions for Follow-Up section are contained in this **Handbook**. See the **For Further Study Bibliography** for full citations of books or manuals.