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TRAINING LEADERS FOR MINISTRY AT CROSSROADS  
COMMUNITY CHURCH IN CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Scott Andrew Nichols  
December 2020

**APPROVAL SHEET**

TRAINING LEADERS FOR MINISTRY AT CROSSROADS  
COMMUNITY CHURCH IN CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

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To my courageous, godly wife, Victoria. She is a genuine Christ follower, wonderful wife, proud mother, beautiful breast cancer survivor, and faithful partner in ministry. She is more precious to me than jewels.

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## PREFACE

Jesus Christ transformed my life as a seventeen-year old. I have dedicated myself to serving him ever since that March morning. Jesus' call led me through college, marriage, graduate school, children, pastoring, moving to Chicago, planting churches, and now to this project. My life roles as husband, father, and pastor are simply arenas for living out his call, because Jesus is Lord of all.

The great joys of my life revolve around my family. Thank you to my wife, Vicki. She endured breast cancer treatment, including surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, all the while actively serving on our staff, managing our home with excellence, and joining me in welcoming our first two grandchildren. She has earned the praise she receives. Thank you to our children, who continually surprise me with their maturity, faith, and skill. And thank you to our grandchildren, who are ridiculously beautiful and sure to overachieve.

Thank you to the good people of Crossroads Community Church, who have grown with me through this project. They make pastoring a joy. This project grew out of a need for leaders at Crossroads, but truthfully, its leaders are responsible in large part for this project being completed. So, thank you to the staff and elders of Crossroads for their unbending support and encouragement.

Leading, feeding, and caring for God's people has been my work for more than 30 years now. Growing additional leaders to share this joy has occupied more of my time in recent years. Developing leaders is the only way to fulfill Jesus' call to equip the saints and thus fulfill our ministry.



I am also grateful for the students who attended this class during the great coronavirus pandemic of 2020—they finished. So many of them served faithfully at Crossroads during a crazy time. I am richer for having taught the class.

Finally, I am thankful for the faculty of Southern Seminary, especially my supervisor, Dr. Matt Haste, who has been a constant source of encouragement. Our very first phone conversation lit a fire that still rages. He motivated me more in four months than others over the past four years. Thank you.

Scott Nichols

West Chicago, Illinois

December 2020

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Crossroads Community Church of Carol Stream, Illinois, exists to glorify God by making, baptizing, and teaching disciples in obedience to Jesus' Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:19-20).<sup>1</sup>

Five years of steady growth resulted in the pastoral staff handling too many tasks with not enough time. Furthermore, legitimate congregational needs, such as spiritual counsel, small group leadership, visitation, children's ministry, care for the elderly, and serving the neediest in our church family, have gone unmet. Follow up on guests and assimilation, primary ways the church has grown, are struggling. As a result, the church risks becoming ineffective at making, baptizing, and teaching disciples.

In recent years, Crossroads has adopted four area churches that faced closure. These churches have become campuses of our congregation. However, our current leadership and staff were overwhelmed by the demands to provide adequate spiritual care for new believers, lead growing ministries, and replant struggling congregations as additional campuses. Crossroads did not lack potential leaders, rather it lacked a clear process for developing and equipping additional leaders to serve well. Therefore, Crossroads needed to develop a simple, repeatable process for training biblically qualified ministry leaders, which is fundamental to sustaining healthy growth in our

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<sup>1</sup> See also Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8.

church. These new ministry leaders needed to be taught how to model godliness, understand the purpose for their ministries, care for those they lead, and equip other believers to do the work of ministry (Eph 4:11-13; 1 Tim 4:12).<sup>2</sup>

### **Context**

This project took place at Crossroads Community Church in Carol Stream, Illinois, during the spring of 2020. Crossroads is a 2001 replant of First Baptist Church of Lombard (FBCL). A replant takes place when an existing church closes and restarts as a new congregation, usually with a new name, pastor, and leadership team. Crossroads replanted FBCL in 2001 and has enjoyed renewal and growth since. Over the past five years we have baptized or welcomed more than 400 new converts and young believers. During that same time, the church has added seven new staff members, moved offices off campus, remodeled the building twice (2015, 2018), built a new building, and added two additional campuses. This growth and change required steady leadership from the elders, ministry leaders, and me. The growth also revealed the need for a leadership development plan that enables continued healthy growth.

Crossroads is led by a team of six elders, including me, who are responsible for the overall direction and guidance of the church. Five staff pastors and five support staff serve under my direction. The pastoral staff is young with four in their early thirties. Twelve deacons (both men and women serve as deacons) serve the practical ministry needs of the congregation. The pastoral staff and volunteers lead key ministries, such as worship, children, student, assimilation, congregational care, and small groups.

Crossroads has a clear purpose, strong unity, and high commitment. The church celebrates evangelism, baptism, and community outreach. The church enjoys unity around God-honoring worship, expositional preaching, warm relationships, and serving one another in love. However, its growth has outpaced its facilities, finances, and

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<sup>2</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

leadership. Therefore, we must develop a process for training biblically qualified ministry leaders to care for our people and sustain effective outreach.

### **Rationale**

Crossroads' ministry setting requires developing biblically qualified ministry leaders. Ministry leaders include three groups of people: elders who provide overall guidance and care, deacons who meet practical ministry needs, and those who lead various ministries within the church, such as small groups, facilities, assimilation, and congregational care. Adding additional campuses provides a great need and opportunity for raising more ministry leaders. Crossroads had enough people to meet these needs, but did not have a process to develop enough qualified people. Therefore, this project created, taught, and evaluated a leadership curriculum that will become a part of the process for training biblically qualified ministry leaders at Crossroads Community Church.

First, the curriculum taught that leadership is influence. In the church's context, ministry leaders are expected to further the purpose of Crossroads Community Church to glorify God by making, baptizing, and teaching disciples. Making disciples begins by sharing the gospel so that an unbeliever turns from sin and believes in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:3-5). Disciples are "made" at conversion, demonstrate their faith through baptism, and thrive as they learn to obey everything Jesus commanded. Baptism in our context is reserved for believers. Teaching new disciples is most effective within the nurturing fellowship of a local church. Teaching to obey should include renewing of the mind through doctrinal teaching and preaching, and progress in righteousness through the practice of holiness.

In Crossroads' context, disciples are encouraged to develop strong relationships leading toward Christlikeness in a small group. Further, disciples should learn to serve others. The Holy Spirit accomplishes this work of growing believers through God's Word

and his church (Rom 8:1-4; Col 2:6-7). Biblically qualified and practically equipped leaders should commit to Crossroads' mission of fulfilling the Great Commission.

Second, the curriculum included an examination of biblical leadership from Exodus 18:13-27; Acts 20:17-35; and 1 Timothy 3:1-13. The study focused on the spiritual and character qualities God requires for those who lead his people. The study also examined the character qualifications for overseers, elders, and deacons. But the application was broadened to include those who lead other areas of ministry since pastors, elders, and deacons are to model a life of faith (1 Tim 4:11-13). Therefore, those character qualities are appropriate for other ministry leaders to model for their teams.

Third, the study taught basic hermeneutics. Teaching hermeneutics reflects my belief that the Scriptures are the foundation and source of wisdom for the people of God. Teaching ministry leaders how to accurately interpret the Scriptures empowers them to protect the church and solve problems.

Understanding God's Word strengthens and equips ministry leaders to influence those under their care (Acts 20:27-32). Therefore, the curriculum taught participants how to observe, interpret, and apply God's Word to their own lives and those they lead. Ministry leaders were taught the power of biblical truth to equip men and women to grow in their faith and serve others: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Fourth, the study taught practical application of leadership principles for elders, deacons, and other ministry leaders. Those who participated were taught how to serve in a manner appropriate to their giftedness and further the church's mission to the world (Rom 12:1-8; Gal 6:9-10; 1 Thess 1:2-10; 1 Pet 4:7-11). The curriculum also taught practical leadership skills, such as communicating vision, teambuilding, leading constructive change, and perseverance. Participants in this study showed an increase in

knowledge about the requirements for spiritual leadership among elders, deacons, and ministry leaders at Crossroads Community Church (Phil 2:12-18; 1 Pet 3:13-16).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to increase the knowledge of biblically qualified ministry leaders by creating, teaching, and evaluating a curriculum to be taught at Crossroads Community Church in Carol Stream, Illinois.

### **Goals**

This project sought to achieve three goals.

1. The first goal was to develop a six-session curriculum covering the need for, qualifications for, and practical skills for ministry leadership at Crossroads Community Church.
2. The second goal was to increase the knowledge base of participants for ministry leadership by teaching the training curriculum in a six-session series of classes.
3. The third goal was to increase participation in ministry leadership at Crossroads by adding 10 ministry leaders who have completed the ministry leadership course.

### **Research Methodology**

This section will describe the research methodology and instrument used to measure the success of each project goal.

The first goal was to develop a six-session ministry training curriculum that examines the need and qualifications for biblical church leadership. The study included a pre-class and post-class survey designed to measure knowledge and attitudes of participants before and after the curriculum was taught.<sup>3</sup> The curriculum included six sessions taught in 90-120 minutes. Individual sessions defined leadership as influence toward a worthy goal, the priority of character in a leader's life, a review of the gospel, basic hermeneutics, qualities of effective leaders, and basic skills that strengthen leadership. Pre-class

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<sup>3</sup> The research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in this ministry project.

assignments invited participants to research examples of biblical leadership from Exodus 18, Matthew 20, and Acts 20. The study covered foundational, doctrinal, and Bible study material because that information is fundamental to effective ministry leadership. The study was designed to increase ministry leaders' knowledge of biblical content and practical skill. The study also included a section on best practices for ministry leadership, including case studies appropriate to the local church setting.

This goal was measured by an expert panel, including a local pastor, elder, and two college professors. The panel used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, clarity, and applicability of the curriculum to the church setting.<sup>4</sup> This goal was successfully met when the expert panel rated the curriculum to have met 96 percent of the evaluation criteria. If the evaluation had not indicated that 90 percent meets or exceeds the criteria, then the curriculum would have been revised until it met or exceeded the sufficient level.

The second goal was to increase the knowledge base of participants for ministry leadership by teaching the training curriculum in a six-session series of classes at Crossroads Community Church. Participant learning was gauged by administering a pre-class and post-class survey measuring the participants understanding of the purpose, need for, qualifications of, and best practices for local church leadership.

Current and future ministry leaders were the intended participants for this class. Attendees were judged to have successfully participated when they attend four of the six class sessions. Further, this class was successful because at least twelve current or future ministry leaders completed the class (elders, deacons, or other ministry leaders).

This goal was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a meaningfully positive difference in the mean scores on the pre and post-survey. A *t*-test for dependent samples compares the means from each group of scores

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 2 for the curriculum rubric.

and focuses on the differences between pre- and post-survey results.<sup>5</sup> A *t*-test for dependent samples “involves a comparison of the means from each group of scores and focuses on the differences between the scores.”<sup>6</sup> The *t*-test was used to ensure that the variations in score are not due to chance, but that actual learning has occurred.

The third goal was to increase participation in ministry leadership at Crossroads by adding 10 new ministry leaders who have completed the ministry leadership course. This goal was measured by administering a pre- and post-analysis of current ministry leaders. The number of active ministry leaders as of January 1, 2019 was used as the base number to which the increase will be compared.<sup>7</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when the number of ministry leaders at Crossroads Community Church increased by 13 people who completed the leadership course.

### **Definitions and Delimitations**

This section defines key terms used throughout this project.

*Ministry leader.* Ministry leaders are defined as pastors, elders, deacons, and leaders of other Crossroads’ ministries that serve the congregation. A ministry leader may or may not work directly with those served by their ministry, but they lead those who do. For example, the children’s director does not teach a class, but leads 120 volunteers who serve families.

*Biblically qualified.* For this study *biblically qualified* means that leaders should consistently model the biblical criteria for maturity and leadership addressed within the study. These qualifications are covered in the curriculum in pre-class

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<sup>5</sup> The *t*-test was selected for this analysis because it compares the means of the scores from the pre-test and post-test, which measured ministry leadership knowledge among the select group of ministry leaders.

<sup>6</sup> Neil J. Salkind, *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 191.

<sup>7</sup> Crossroads approves ministry leaders at the annual meeting in January.



assignments and class discussion of Exodus 18:13-27; Matthew 20:20-28; Acts 20:28-35; 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Specific roles such as pastor/elder/overseer and deacon have qualifications carefully spelled out in Scripture (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5). This study examined the character requirements in those passages, but application was made to ministry leaders in general since pastors/elders/deacons serve as examples to the flock (1 Tim 4:12; Heb 13:7-8, 17-19; 1 Pet 5:3). The curriculum contended that ministry leaders within the local church should set an example of Christian maturity for those they serve. Further, leaders should exercise their specific ministry roles in a God-honoring way. “In Christian ministry, character is everything.”<sup>8</sup>

*Elder.* Crossroads Community Church is an elder-led church. Once an elder is approved by the congregation, he serves with freedom to lead in all areas of ministry, including direction, doctrine, finances, and discipline. At Crossroads, elders have the same authority, but differing levels of influence by virtue of their roles (1 Tim 5:17, Heb 13:7-8). The senior pastor (always an elder in our setting) who preaches weekly has a larger influence than the elder who serves quietly behind the scenes. However, both serve a vital role within the church for the glory of God.

*Deacon.* Deacons serve the practical ministry needs of Crossroads Community Church, including budgets, buildings, and benevolence. Either men or women may serve as deacons at Crossroads.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Leading with Love* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 2006), 41.

<sup>9</sup> Crossroads believes the Scriptures teach that women can serve as deacons. Rom 16:1 calls Phoebe a “servant” of the church at Cenchreae.” Furthermore, the apostle Paul encourages the Roman church to “welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you.” He uses this formula of church representatives in other settings: Rom 15:24; Cor 16:6, 10-11, 12; Eph 6:21-22; Phil 2:25, 29. While these references do not *prove* Phoebe was a deacon, Paul does call her a “servant” (deacon) of the church and requests that the Roman church assist her. Taken together, these verses lend weight to the suggestion that Phoebe was a deacon serving the church. Further, when Paul lists qualifications for deacons in 1 Tim 3:8-13, he breaks the list of qualifications to address the “women” followed by his use of the word, “likewise” (v. 11). This same formula breaks Paul’s discussion of overseer qualifications before he moves to deacon qualifications (v. 8). Furthermore, there is no discussion of qualifications for overseers’ wives in vv. 1-7. One may reasonably ask why there would be a need to define qualifications for deacon’s wives but not overseers’ wives. The reason is because Paul is listing the

This project had several delimitations. First, this project was limited to those who are or are prospective ministry leaders at Crossroads Community Church, which includes pastors, elders, deacons, small group leaders, and other ministry leaders. Second, this project was limited to eighteen weeks including pre and post-assessment, curriculum construction, teaching, revision, and evaluation. Third, the scope of ministry leadership for this project included both men and women since both serve as ministry leaders at Crossroads. Both men and women should provide example, spiritual care, and training for those they lead.<sup>10</sup> This project does not examine the role of women in pastoral ministry.<sup>11</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Crossroads Community Church must develop a simple, repeatable process for training biblically qualified ministry leaders to serve as elders, deacons, and other ministry leaders. These ministry leaders must increase their knowledge base of biblical content and practical skill to be effective in their roles. The purpose of this project was to increase the knowledge of biblically qualified ministry leaders by creating, teaching, and evaluating a curriculum taught at Crossroads Community Church in Carol Stream, Illinois. This project was designed to result in the deployment of additional elders, deacons, and ministry leaders who model godliness, care for those they lead, and prepare other believers to do the work of ministry at Crossroads Community Church.

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qualifications for women who serve as deacons in the local church in v. 11, before returning to general deacon qualifications in vv. 12-13. Either approach raises difficulties. And while godly believers may disagree on this issue, Crossroads believes that the biblical evidence favors women serving as deacons.

<sup>10</sup> Women do not serve as elders or preaching pastors, nor do they preach in the public worship services of Crossroads. This reflects our understanding that the biblical role of women in the local church includes significant ministry in many areas, including speaking and prayer (1 Cor 11:5, 14:34-35). However, God has reserved the ruling elder and preaching roles for men (1 Tim 2:12-15).

<sup>11</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Kathy Keller, *Jesus, Justice, and Gender Roles: A Case for Gender Roles in Ministry* (New York: Penguin, 2013); Michael F. Bird, *Bourgeois Babes, Bossy Wives, and Bobby Haircuts: A Case for Gender Equality in Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012); James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg, eds., *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPING MINISTRY LEADERS

Developing and deploying godly, gifted leaders must be a priority for the local church. God's people need leadership and care to remain healthy and grow in their faith. The local church needs healthy leadership to fulfill its calling to make, baptize, and teach followers of Jesus Christ. Churches hire God-called, skilled pastors and staff, but the demands of growing ministry can often overwhelm them. Frustration rises and pastors leave, and then those same churches will spend even more energy and resources hiring another pastor or more staff. However, the church often fails to accomplish God's calling to make, baptize, and teach followers of Jesus Christ from all nations (Matt 28:19-20). Energy can be dissipated by reacting to demands of ministry rather than proactively moving forward the church's mission. When a local church does not develop godly, gifted leaders from within, it will struggle to sustain growth and may be in danger of failing.

This chapter will examine the biblical and theological foundations for developing ministry leaders in a local church by focusing on three biblical texts: Exodus 18, Acts 20, and 1 Timothy 3. Taken together, these texts will demonstrate the need for healthy ministry leaders within a local church. Further, those ministry leaders must model godly character as they care for the church and lead members to fulfill God's calling.

In my experience, most local churches do not prioritize developing leaders. Either they do not understand the need, or they do not have a plan for accomplishing this goal. Therefore, biblically faithful churches must prioritize developing and deploying godly, gifted ministry leaders from within the congregation. These ministry leaders should care for and lead God's people toward maturity and faithfulness. The following section

will examine the great value God places on his people, and therefore, the value of qualified leaders.

### **God's People Need Leaders**

God loves his redeemed people and works for their protection and perfection. He calls his people to bring him glory by furthering his will on the earth.<sup>1</sup> This high calling for God's people requires godly leaders to protect, care for, and lead them toward fulfilling that calling. Godly, gifted leaders please God, strengthen his people, and expand the gospel. Both the Old and New Testaments demonstrate the value God places on those who lead and care for his people.<sup>2</sup> For example, in Genesis, God called Abram, promised him great blessing, transformed him from an idol worshiper, and renamed him, "Abraham," the father of Israel. God led and preserved the Patriarchs during their long sojourn in Canaan. He sent Joseph into Egypt to preserve the family. Later, Joseph welcomed and provided for his entire family in Egypt "so that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Gen 50:20).

After 400 years, the LORD<sup>3</sup> heard and responded to his people's cry while they were enslaved in Egypt and sent Moses to deliver his people from slavery and escape Pharaoh's pursuit at the Red Sea.<sup>4</sup> After the Exodus, one of Moses' primary tasks was to raise leaders for this newly redeemed people so they might serve the purpose to which God called them (Exod 19:4-6).

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see Gen 1:28, 12:1-3, 50:18-20; Exod 19:4-6, Deut 10:12-16, 30:19-20; Pss 78:5-7; 115:1-3; Isa 42:6-9; Ezek 36:22-23; Hab 2:14.

<sup>2</sup> See Exod 3:10; 1 Sam 13:14, 16:13; Ps 78:70-72; Ezek 34:11; Matt 20:25-28; John 21:15-19; Acts 6:3-7, 20:28; Phil 2:19-22; 1 Tim 3:1-13, 4:12-16.

<sup>3</sup> Many English Bible versions translate God's covenant name, "YHWH," as "LORD." See, for example, *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2007), ix.

<sup>4</sup> See Gen 2:27-29, 3:21, 48:15, 50:19-20; Exod 2:23-25, 15:11-13.

When Moses died, God sent Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land. After Joshua died “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” The Scriptures attribute this decline to a lack of effective leadership: “In those days there was no king in Israel” (Jdg 21:25). So, God sent Judges to lead his people to renewal. Later still, the LORD raised up King David to “shepherd Jacob his people” (Ps 78:71). Throughout Israel’s history, God raised up kings and prophets who led the people toward covenant loyalty. During 400 hundred years of silence between the Old and New Testaments, the people struggled to be faithful, but when the time was right, God sent Jesus to seek and save the lost.<sup>5</sup> And so, God redeemed a New Covenant people for himself.<sup>6</sup>

During his earthly ministry, Jesus prioritized calling, appointing, and sending out apostles who extended his mission. After his resurrection, Jesus sent the apostles throughout the Roman world to proclaim the gospel and establish churches. The apostles obeyed, God blessed, and churches were established around the Mediterranean basin.<sup>7</sup>

In the early years of great growth, the apostles prioritized developing qualified, godly leaders in the local churches they established. Those next generation leaders were charged with extending the gospel, teaching healthy doctrine, protecting the congregation from threats, modeling godliness, suffering for doing right, calling the congregation to obedience, and raising up additional, qualified leaders.<sup>8</sup> In the same way today, effective pastors must raise godly, gifted leaders within the local churches they serve—that priority has not changed with the passing of centuries.

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<sup>5</sup> See Josh 1:1-2, 6; Judg 2:16, 21:25; Ps 78:71; 2 Chron 16:9, 34:19, 36:21-23; Mal 4:4-6; Luke 19:10; John 3:16-17; Gal 4:4.

<sup>6</sup> God has related to his people through a series of agreements called covenants. These covenants define the relationship and responsibilities for both God who initiates, and his people who are called to respond in obedient faith. The primary covenants in the Old Testament are Abrahamic (Gen 12:1-3, 15:1-21, 17:1-21); Mosaic (Exod 19:5-9, 20:1-21, 24:1-18, 34:1-28); Davidic (2 Sam 7:8-17; Ps 78:70-71; Jer 23:5-6; Matt 1:1; Luke 1:32-33), and New (Jer 31:31-38).

<sup>7</sup> See Matt 28:16-20; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:8, 2:38-41, 9:31, 28:31.

<sup>8</sup> See Acts 11:22-26, 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1-13, 4:11-16; 2 Tim 2:2, 4:1-5; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5.

This chapter will examine three biblical passages to demonstrate that local churches should place a priority on developing godly leaders. Exodus 18:13-27 illustrates the need for leaders who model moral excellence. Acts 20:17-38 demonstrates that ministry leaders should provide spiritual protection and care for the local church they serve. First Timothy 3:1-13 lists the qualifications the apostle Paul placed on overseers and deacons in the early church. Furthermore, the 1 Timothy passage serves as a model for the character qualities that should be demonstrated by those who serve as ministry leaders in today's churches since elders and deacons are to be models of Christian maturity.

While the passages under consideration in this chapter focus on specific qualities for leadership roles within the covenant communities of Israel and the Church (Judges, elders/overseers, and deacons), these qualities reveal what the Lord values in his people. In other words, the spiritual leaders under consideration in this chapter were to model what every community member was to live out. Therefore, expecting these qualities in those who lead in local church ministry is appropriate.<sup>9</sup> Churches that want to be healthy and strong as they pursue their mission must be intentional about a process for developing and deploying godly and gifted leaders.

### **Exodus 18:13-27: God's People Need Spiritual Leaders**

After the thrilling Exodus from Egypt and miraculous deliverance through the Red Sea, pedestrian problems plagued God's people. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, and into the wilderness near Mount Sinai. There he was nearly crushed under the weight of leading, instructing, and caring for God's people. The people were free, but they needed to learn how to live as a redeemed people among the nations.

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<sup>9</sup> While the texts in question relate to Judges in ancient Israel and officers in the New Testament church, the principle of gifted, godly leadership applies to today's church. Especially in the local church, pastor, elders, overseers, and deacons are to model godliness for the congregations they lead. Requiring these kinds of qualities from those who lead other ministries in the local church is appropriate. Small group leaders, children and student ministry leaders, and worship leaders should model moral excellence for those they lead/serve.

God had called them to be a kingdom of priests for the nations (Exod 19:4-6), but the people had known only slavery for many generations.<sup>10</sup> Handling questions and conflicts regarding covenant relationships occupied Moses for many hours each day. From morning till night, he complained that “the people come to me to enquire of God . . . and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws” (Exod 18:15-16). The task had become too much for Moses alone (v. 18). Thomas Dozeman points out that the Hebrew text is unambiguous when read literally, “Wearing out you will wear out.”<sup>11</sup> Moses needed help to lead and care for the people.

### **Leading God’s People is Demanding**

As recorded in Exodus 18, Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, visited him in the wilderness shortly after the Exodus. At this moment, the pressure of leading the people reached a critical point. Jethro saw the strain on Moses and offered both a warning and a solution. Old Testament scholar Cassuto rephrases Jethro’s warning to Moses in Exodus 18:17-18: “You will become weak and ill . . . *both you and this people* . . . for the thing that you do is too heavy for you—is more than you can endure—you *cannot perform it alone*.”<sup>12</sup> Jethro urged Moses to raise up “able men from all the people . . . and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens” (18:21). Then he would “be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace” (18:23).

Personal endurance and congregational peace are results that every spiritual leader would love to enjoy. But sharing the ministry load can be dangerous, so the next paragraph of Exodus 18 provides guidance for the kind of person who should be

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<sup>10</sup> Exod 12:37 places the number at 600,000 men, besides women and children.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 407.

<sup>12</sup> U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press of The Hebrew University, 1997), 219, emphasis original.

considered for shared leadership of God’s people. Specifically, Moses was to “look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people” (18:21). These men must have both skill (able men) and character (trustworthy). They must fear God—this was the primary requirement. Thomas Dozeman points out that Jethro’s “advice is that Moses ‘perceive’ the qualities of justice and truth in the judges he appoints.”<sup>13</sup> Rather than tribal influence, wealth, or age, Moses was to select skilled men with high moral character. Old Testament scholar Alan Cole notes that these men were to have “moral, rather than intellectual, qualities.”<sup>14</sup> That is, these men should demonstrate observable moral quality before they were appointed to lead others.

### **Leading God’s People Should Be Shared**

Moses faced a challenge familiar to all who lead people—he needed help to be effective. His father-in-law, Jethro, provided Moses with sage advice about the kind of person fit for leadership. The advice applies today: those who would lead God’s people must model high moral excellence. This is the pattern throughout the Old Testament. In fact, when Israel’s spiritual leaders failed as Covenant role models, God promised a New Covenant in which he himself would shepherd his people.<sup>15</sup> Jesus fulfilled that promise.<sup>16</sup>

The need for morally qualified leaders for God’s people is a repeated theme in the New Testament. Jesus commissioned the apostles to carry on and multiply his ministry.

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<sup>13</sup> Dozeman, *Exodus*, 409.

<sup>14</sup> R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1971), 141.

<sup>15</sup> See for example Ps 78:70-71; Jer 5:30-31, 31:31-34; Ezek 34:1-6, 11-16.

<sup>16</sup> See John 10:11-18.



Then the apostles passed along to a new generation the priority to model godliness and provide care for the Lord's "sheep."<sup>17</sup>

Faithful pastors today still wrestle with the problem of how to carry out their responsibilities to lead, care for, and instruct the people of God without wearing out both themselves and the congregation. There always seems to be more problems than time and resources to solve the problems. How can pastors move the church's mission forward while struggling to manage day-to-day ministry? A spiritual leader cannot abdicate the mission, nor can he ignore the real needs of the congregation. Pastors also cannot entrust God's people to poorly qualified leaders. Therefore, the local church should have a plan to develop and deploy spiritual leaders from within the congregation.

Like Moses leading Israel in the wilderness, pastors today are called to lead and care for God's people. They must teach God's people how to live holy and purposeful lives before a watching, often hostile world. Peter wrote to a new generation of believers and paraphrased Exodus 19: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9). Therefore, pastors who want to be faithful to their calling and to the church's mission should make a priority of developing qualified ministry leaders within the local church. These leaders should model spiritual maturity, care for the people, and lead the church toward mission accomplishment. Pastors must "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12).

### **Acts 20:17-38: Spiritual Leaders Must Care for God's People**

The New Testament repeatedly demonstrates the need for gifted and godly leaders to care for and protect God's people. Jesus Christ lived and died to provide

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<sup>17</sup> See Matt 20:28; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 4:12-16.

salvation for all who call upon him. He established the church, appointed apostles to be with him, and then commanded them to make disciples of all nations. This Great Commission spurred on the apostles to share the gospel and establish churches throughout the Mediterranean basin during the thirty years after Christ's resurrection and ascension. The church's rapid expansion created the need for godly and gifted leaders to guide and care for those local churches.<sup>18</sup>

While Peter and the other apostles spread the gospel message in and around Jerusalem, a brilliant Jewish Rabbi named Saul of Tarsus (later known as Paul) was converted and began preaching Christ as Lord. Paul was called to be an apostle and went on to become the most influential theologian and church planter of the first century. He and his team of men and women traveled widely establishing churches throughout the eastern Roman Empire. Paul planted churches in influential cities and then developed leaders for the churches he planted.<sup>19</sup>

Near the end of his first missionary journey the apostle Paul revisited the new converts in the cities of the Roman region of Galatia where he had recently preached the gospel. Paul spent his time there "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Then, he "appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (14:23). Paul cared for the church family and developed godly, skilled leaders in the churches he planted. This is pastoral ministry at its finest.

### **Paul Challenges Spiritual Leaders**

Acts 20 records events near the end of Paul's third extended missionary journey. For three years he had worked out of the influential city of Ephesus. Now he was

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<sup>18</sup> See Acts 11:19-26, 19:26; Col 1:6; 2 Tim 2:2; Titus 1:5; Heb 13:7, 17.

<sup>19</sup> See Acts 9:20-3; Rom 15:19-20; Titus 1:5.

headed for Jerusalem to begin a new chapter in ministry, but on his way there Paul called together the elders of the church at Ephesus to give farewell instructions.<sup>20</sup> Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 occupies a critical place in the book. The focus of the book shifts at this point from Paul's missionary activity toward his defense of Christianity against Jewish and Roman opposition. The remainder of the book focuses on Paul's defense of the faith before Jewish and Roman officials. Acts 20 is Paul's only recorded address to believers and gives a glimpse of his pastoral practice.<sup>21</sup>

The Ephesian elders joined Paul at the seaport town of Melitus. Darrell Bock argues that "the presence of elders in Ephesus show that Paul structured the church and its leadership before departing (see Acts 11:30; 14:23). These elders would be responsible for shepherding the church and guiding it, as Paul's speech itself indicates."<sup>22</sup> Paul's counsel is valuable for the task of leadership development in the local church.

The theme of godly, gifted spiritual leaders runs throughout Paul's communication with the Ephesian church. First, there is this speech to the elders. Second, Paul wrote a letter back to Ephesus several years later and briefly touched on the theme of leadership. Third, the need for and qualities of ministry leaders repeats in the pastoral letters he wrote to Timothy a few years after the letter to the Ephesians.

Significantly, Timothy was serving in Ephesus when Paul wrote the pastoral letters to him from prison (likely in Rome). Therefore, godly, gifted spiritual leadership arises in all three of Paul's communications with Ephesus recorded in the New Testament.<sup>23</sup> His farewell speech to the Ephesian elders was the first recorded

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<sup>20</sup> See Acts 19:10, 20:31.

<sup>21</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 623.

<sup>22</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 626.

<sup>23</sup> See Acts 20:20-28, Eph 4:11-16; 1 Tim 1:3, 3:1, 4:6, 5:17-20, 6:11-12, 20-21.

communication from him on the topic of leadership. His speech summarizes that theme by urging the Ephesian elders to watch themselves, care for, and protect the congregation.

The farewell address is a masterpiece of pastoral instruction and helps the modern reader understand pastoral care in the early church. New Testament scholar, F. F. Bruce writes, “Paul wished to give the Ephesian leaders such encouragement as they needed. The speech which follows is not only his farewell speech to them . . . [but] his last will and testament to the churches which he had planted both east and west.”<sup>24</sup> The speech makes clear that spiritual leaders must watch over their own spiritual health so they can effectively care for God’s people.

### **Three Tasks for Spiritual Care**

Paul’s talk to the Ephesian elders falls into three parts, each one of which describes a task for spiritual leaders. First, he reminded the elders of what they had seen in his model of ministry—he had set an example of faithful lifestyle and ministry and now he called them to set the example for the church they served (20:18-27). Second, Paul challenged the elders to pay attention to their own spiritual condition. The church would face threats both from within and from outside of the congregation. Those threats required the elders to be on their guard. Third, Paul charged the elders to “care for (shepherd/pastor) the church of God.”<sup>25</sup> This “care” was the essence of the elder task. In short, Paul’s speech provides a helpful outline of the tasks an elder (and by extension, other ministry leaders) should focus upon as he discharges his God-given duties. Providing a godly example, growing in spiritual maturity, and caring for God’s people were high priorities for church leaders in New Testament times. Those same qualities should be leadership priorities today as well.

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<sup>24</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 387.

<sup>25</sup> The ESV footnote on Acts 20:28 translates “with the blood of his Own,” meaning God’s own son, Jesus.

## **Provide an Example**

In this farewell address to the Ephesian elders, Paul spends considerable time reminding them what they should “know” or “remember” about his own example while he was in Ephesus (20:18-27, 31-35). Above all, Paul served the Lord (v. 19). His relational authority<sup>26</sup> with the Ephesians grew out of the life he lived before them and his commitment to serve the Lord. Paul specifically mentioned that he modeled humility, tears, boldness, tenacity, and fearlessness. His ministry was an active one. Verses 19-25 are laced with verbs describing his lifestyle and ministry to the Ephesians. Paul declared, taught, testified, proclaimed, ministered, and worked hard among them. He was also so committed to the ministry of the gospel that he persevered in the face of certain danger ahead (v. 23).

Paul’s depth of determination was revealed in his attitude toward the sure threats he was about to face. In response, he said, “I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (v. 24). His example challenged the elders to see their ministry as a calling from God to serve the local church. They should prioritize elder ministry over their own pursuits. Paul’s powerful words surely left a strong impression on the gathered elders.

Church leaders today should also model high commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ in lifestyle and service. Further, ministry leaders should call men and women under their care to live that same life of commitment to the Lord. As the church grows and the need for additional leaders arises, current leaders should look for those whose lives demonstrate godliness and commitment to the purposes of the church. Those kinds of men and women will most effectively lead the local church toward greater faithfulness in doctrine and practice.

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<sup>26</sup> Paul also had a unique “Apostolic authority” that pastors today do not share. See 2 Cor 10:8, 13:10; Gal 1:11-12; 2 Tim 1:1.

## Pay Attention

The second part of Paul’s speech (vv. 28-35) challenged the Ephesian elders to model the same kind of commitment he did in his leadership and care for the church while he was with them. Two commands in the second part of this speech help to define an elder’s role within a local church. Paul challenged the elders to “pay careful attention to yourselves” (v. 28), and to “be alert” (v. 31).

Elders are to be on guard. Both commands urge awareness, wakefulness. Pastor and New Testament scholar John Stott comments, “The Ephesian pastors must first keep watch over themselves, and only then over the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them responsible. For they cannot care adequately for others if they neglect the care and culture of their own souls.”<sup>27</sup> David Peterson agrees and further notes that the force of the commands make the point that “Christian leaders cannot care adequately for others if they neglect the care and nurture of themselves.”<sup>28</sup>

First, spiritual leaders are to carefully watch over their own spiritual condition—“Pay careful attention to yourselves” (v. 28). Effective spiritual leadership begins with appropriate attention to the leader’s own heart. Paul challenged those elders to pay attention to themselves first and then to the whole flock of God over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers. Bock points out, “The key exhortation to the elders is that they should take constant heed to themselves, fulfilling their overseer role.”<sup>29</sup> Elders who go astray will surely lead the sheep astray. I. Howard Marshall concludes, “It is only

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<sup>27</sup> John Stott, *The Spirit, the Church, and the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 326.

<sup>28</sup> David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Pillar New Testament Commentary, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 568.

<sup>29</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 629.

as the leaders themselves remain faithful to God that they can expect the church to do so likewise.”<sup>30</sup>

Additionally, elders, and more broadly spiritual leaders of all kinds, must pay attention because of threats to the church from both inside and outside of the congregation (Acts 20:29-30). The “Fierce wolves” that Paul warned about represent external threats from people who come into the church seeking to ravage the flock—primarily false teachers, but also perhaps governmental pressure. These influences challenged believers in Ephesus in that day, just as they challenge believers today.<sup>31</sup>

The church at Ephesus also faced the internal threat of false teachers and power brokers—members, perhaps rogue elders, who would later arise “speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:30). These divisive teachers would come from within the congregation and must be put down by humble, watchful elders. These threats demand that elders pay careful attention to themselves first and then to the flock of God. Bruce writes, “The sheep will have to be guarded with unceasing vigilance, for ferocious wolves will try to force their way among them and ravage them.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Provide Care**

The third part of Paul’s speech called the Ephesian elders to care for the flock. Paul reminded the elders of the great value God places on his people by pointing out that the church was “obtained with the blood of his Own [Son].”<sup>33</sup> Marshall comments that the Greek word translated into English as “care for” means “to act as a shepherd;’ it

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<sup>30</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1980), 352.

<sup>31</sup> See also Acts 19:11-41; Eph 1:17-18, 4:17, 5:3-4, 6:10-12; Rev 2:1-7.

<sup>32</sup> Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 393.

<sup>33</sup> See the ESV’s note on the alternate reading of Acts 20:29.

refers to all the care that must be exercised in relation to the flock.”<sup>34</sup> The church is so valuable that Jesus gave his life for her, yet she faces such great threats that those who lead must care for, feed, lead, guide, and protect the flock so it is healthy and strong.

Interestingly, the apostle Paul uses the noun form of this same word, “care for,” in his letter to the Ephesians, written a few years later. He wrote that God “gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds [the word for “care for” in Acts 20:28] and teachers” as gifts to the church. The purpose for these gifts is to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain . . . mature manhood” (Eph 4:11-13). Therefore, a primary task of ministry leaders (apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors) should be to develop additional ministry leaders who grow the church toward maturity in Christ. Achieving that maturity requires that a church be led by gifted and godly ministry leaders who model maturity and provide care for the congregation.

The New Testament indicates that this care should include serving the weak and hurting, seeking those who stray, restoring those who have fallen into sin, challenging believers to greater fruitfulness, modeling godliness, teaching, rebuking, and correcting with all longsuffering.<sup>35</sup> This kind of care leads to growth. Growth brings further threats, raising the need for more spiritual care. Therefore, healthy, growing churches will have a constant need for leaders to protect and care for the congregation.<sup>36</sup>

In the face of these challenges, churches must make gospel progress, not simply sit back in a defensive posture. Gospel progress requires leaders who will pursue Great Commission ministry in the face of threats to church health from inside and outside. In short, biblically healthy churches do not sit back and build fortresses, they stay

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<sup>34</sup> Marshall, *Acts*, 352.

<sup>35</sup> See Rom 12:6-16; Gal 6:1-4; 1 Tim 4:12-16; 2 Tim 4:1-4; Heb 10:24-25.

<sup>36</sup> See for example Acts 6:1-7.



on offense for the gospel. Leaders must provide the fuel for that forward momentum.<sup>37</sup> And, ministry leaders must reproduce themselves. This is why developing additional leaders must be a priority.

### **Developing Leaders Must Be a Priority**

Effective leadership development in the local church should equip potential leaders with the skills to pay attention to their own spiritual health, recognize threats to the church, and provide care for the congregation. Prospective leaders should be taught the value of leadership, the priority of their own spiritual life, Bible study skills (the source of sound faith and practice), how to provide spiritual care, and some basic leadership skills; for example, how to deal with those who get out of line (1 Thess 5:14). Further, emerging leaders should see models of maturity in current leadership, so that they develop right thinking, attitudes, language, and lifestyles to model for the church.<sup>38</sup>

In his farewell speech to the Ephesian elders, Paul challenged the elders to watch their own lives because modeling is fundamental to spiritual leadership in the church. In other words, pastors/elders are not called to a higher level of godliness than the congregation, but because of their public roles they *must* model godly and skilled leadership.<sup>39</sup> Because leaders are expected to model the faith for those they serve, the qualities and responsibilities to which Paul calls these elders are fair expectations for ministry leaders with less public roles.

Pastors and elders should call future leaders of the church to the same kinds of commitments to which Paul called the Ephesian elders. These commitments include modeling the faith, watching for spiritual threats, and caring for God's church. Bock

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<sup>37</sup> See for example 2 Tim 4:1-5.

<sup>38</sup> See Heb 13:7; 1 Pet 5:3.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example 1 Cor 4:16-17, 11:1; Phil 2:19-24; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7; Heb 13:7.

concludes, “If the blood of God’s Son is good enough for the sheep, so is the faithful labor of his steward-shepherds for the flock God has bought.”<sup>40</sup>

### **First Timothy 3:1-13: Spiritual Leaders Must Be Qualified**

In his farewell speech, the apostle Paul had charged the Ephesian elders to pay attention to their spiritual lives and care for the congregation they served—God’s flock (Acts 20). Several years later he wrote the Ephesians a letter reminding them that God gave spiritual leaders to the church to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (4:12). The church grows stronger and more mature as a result (4:13-16).

Years after his letter to the Ephesians, Paul wrote a pastoral letter to his protégé, Timothy, who was serving the church in Ephesus. This pastoral letter challenged Timothy to deal with serious doctrinal and practical problems that had arisen in the Ephesian church. In the letter, Paul instructed Timothy on the qualifications for effective spiritual leaders, specifically overseers/elders/pastors, and deacons (1 Tim 3:1-13).

Paul addressed questions like: Who should lead? What is expected from them? How does the church develop and deploy leaders? In 1 Timothy 3, Paul provided specific character qualifications for leaders within the local church. These qualities are what churches should look for and develop in those who lead others.

### **Faulty Leaders Tear Down the Church**

Years prior to writing 1 Timothy, when Paul met the Ephesian elders in person, he had warned them of threats from within and outside of the church. By the time he wrote the first letter to Timothy, those threats had come true. False teachers were drawing away disciples after themselves, some had already shipwrecked their faith, the church

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<sup>40</sup> Bock, *Acts*, 634.

was riven with strife, and false teachers, driven by greed and deception, were preying on members.<sup>41</sup>

Paul responded to those threats by urging Timothy to stay in place and set things right. “The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim 1:5), but love was not blind. He was clear about the threat to the Ephesian church and Timothy’s task: “As I urged you . . . remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine . . . Certain persons . . . have wandered away into vain discussion . . . some have made a shipwreck of their faith” (1 Tim 1:3, 6, 19).

Teaching the Ephesians what godly leadership should look like was a central part of Timothy’s mission. The right kind of ministry leader would expose false teachers and give the church a model of healthy leadership. So, in 1 Timothy 3, Paul included specific qualifications for two kinds of spiritual leaders within the church: overseers/elders and deacons.<sup>42</sup> These qualifications focus on moral qualities rather than specific skills. They should be the benchmark for leaders in local churches today as well.

Too often in local churches the qualifications for leadership can revolve around longevity, family connections, or success in business. While these factors are important matters, they are insufficient for spiritual leadership within the local church. Local church

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<sup>41</sup> See 1 Tim 1:6-7, 9, 5:15, 6:3-10, 21.

<sup>42</sup> First Tim 3:1-7 specifically mentions “overseer,” but most evangelical scholars understand overseer/elder as interchangeable descriptions for senior leaders in the local church. The words are used interchangeably in Paul’s farewell address to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, in the instructions to Timothy in 1 Tim 3, and by Simon Peter in his instructions to elders in 1 Pet 5. Further, when Paul wrote to Titus about qualifications for “elder,” he used almost the exact same list of qualifications as for overseer in 1 Tim. And, in his list of “elder” qualifications in Titus, Paul notes that an “overseer” must be above reproach. This seems to indicate that an overseer was among the elders, or more likely, that oversight was one responsibility of an elder. These titles would be equivalent to pastors/elders in most evangelical Protestant churches today. See treatments of this topic in William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 186-92; Philip Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 13 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2006), 241-47.

leadership requires a level of spiritual maturity demonstrated by an honorable, God-centered lifestyle lived out before the church and the watching world.

### **Four Kinds of Qualifications for Ministry Leaders**

The list of qualifications for overseer/ministry leadership in 1 Timothy 3 fall into four general categories: personal life (vv. 1-3), family life (vv. 4-5), spiritual maturity (v. 6), and public reputation (v. 7). The qualifications for deacon/deaconess are nearly identical to those for overseer. The major difference being that an overseer should be able to teach (v. 2), while this is not required for deacons.

The first thing Paul wrote about an overseer is that the role itself is a good or noble work. Even in the context of Ephesus where leadership was deficient, Paul makes the point that those who desire (reach out toward) the role of overseer desire a good work. That is, the church should hold ministry leadership in high regard. Recruiting ministry leaders by diminishing the responsibilities or qualifications hurts the church. Ministry leadership should be held up as honorable, demanding, and rewarding.

**A leader's personal life.** The first character requirement is to be “above reproach” (v. 2). This general requirement serves as an umbrella qualification for all those that follow.<sup>43</sup> The phrase means that someone is blameless (NIV) in reputation. They cannot be justly accused of wrongdoing; they are not known for lacking character. Commentators Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin summarize: “The word suggests the meaning *not to be taken hold of*. It describes a person of such character that no one can properly bring against him a charge of unfitness.”<sup>44</sup> One who leads the church should be

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<sup>43</sup> See for example Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 95; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 240.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1 & 2 Timothy, & Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1992), 109, emphasis original

known as a person of unblemished character. Towner comments that this quality is placed “within the opening phrase and its wide scope suggest that this is the essential requirement for candidacy.”<sup>45</sup> William Mounce adds, “The overall concern is that church leaders be above reproach in their daily lives.”<sup>46</sup>

Next, Paul lists six positive personal character qualities: “The husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach” (1 Tim 3:2). “Husband of one wife” can be translated more literally as “one-woman man.”<sup>47</sup> The same phrase is used with the genders reversed in 1 Timothy 5:9: “the wife of one husband.”

This phrase could mean that the overseer must be married, not have multiple wives (polygamy), not remarry after death or divorce, or be a man known as faithful to his wife.<sup>48</sup> Paul values singleness in ministry (1 Cor 7:7-8), so that would not be a disqualification for leadership. He also encourages remarriage as the best option for young widows in 5:14, which seems to eliminate this option.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, a few sentences later Paul equates effectiveness in leading the home with effectiveness leading a church. The meaning of faithfulness to his wife seems most likely in view of this context where character is under discussion. A ministry leader must be known as morally faithful to his wife—he must be morally pure.

The next three personal qualities build one upon the next. Sober-minded means clear thinking, not under the influence of distractions. The root of the compound word means to be free from wine, but also indicates clear-minded, not under distracting

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<sup>45</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 250.

<sup>46</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 155. Mounce provides a helpful chart on pp. 156-58 listing the character qualifications for ministry leaders (overseers/elders and deacons) from all three lists in the Pastoral Epistles.

<sup>47</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170.

<sup>48</sup> Guthrie, Fee, Mounce, and Towner all provide discussion of these interpretations, and all favor my interpretation.

<sup>49</sup> See also Paul’s discussion of marriage, divorce, and remarriage in 1 Cor 7.

influences (Paul discusses alcohol use a little later in this same text, v. 3). Mounce explains that the word “describes a sobriety of judgment, clear-mindedness, with the nuance of self-control.”<sup>50</sup> Sober-mindedness leads one to be self-controlled. Clear minded self-control results in a life that is respectable (v. 2). Respectable “describes a person whose orderly outward life is a reflection of inner stability.”<sup>51</sup> The ministry leader should not be out of control, flighty, or unstable.

A person who cannot manage his own life will not likely be able to care for the spiritual well-being of members within the church. A person who bounces from one personal crisis to the next is not qualified to lead others through their own crises. Those who are always late for church appear to disqualify themselves from oversight of that church. While this qualification may seem harsh, the reality is that quality leaders demonstrate the ability to manage their own lives well, thus making them potential leaders for others within the church. Therefore, when churches are considering elder/pastor candidates, they should examine them to be sure their lives evidence order. Self-management creates the capacity to lead and serves as an example for others within the church community.

The previous three qualities focused on self-leadership, the next two deal with how a leader relates to others. *Hospitable* means to love strangers. New Testament scholar Gordon Fee notes that hospitality was “a thoroughgoing expectation of all Christians in the early church,”<sup>52</sup> which was critical in the ancient Near East before hotels were available. Christian teachers or ministers who traveled from city to city required lodging. Strangers who were visiting town or in great need should be able to count on Christian hospitality.

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<sup>50</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 173.

<sup>51</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1 & 2 Timothy, & Titus*, 110.

<sup>52</sup> Gordon Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy Titus*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 81.

Jesus taught this quality in his parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10). He benefited from the hospitality of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha (significantly, immediately after Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10). In the same way, a ministry leader should be generous and approachable, using their resources to help others (especially those they may not know). This is an attractive quality in a leader.

The last positive quality listed for a ministry leader is “able to teach.” This requirement is the only technical skill on the list of character qualities and likely reflects the overseer’s teaching role within the local church.<sup>53</sup> Deacons, however, are required to “hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Tim 3:9). Therefore, both overseers and deacons must have enough doctrinal background to hold onto the faith with integrity.

Those leaders who have a teaching role must be able to communicate that faith skillfully. But even in their teaching, character matters. A teacher whose life backs up the message amplifies the message. In a pastoral letter, Paul wrote and urged Titus to “Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us” (Titus 2:7-8). Clearly, a ministry leader’s teaching should be respected by those inside and outside the church family. In his instruction to Titus, Paul even pointed out that a teacher’s character can be an evangelistic tool. Church leaders must accentuate the gospel message in word and deed. Those who do not, are not qualified to lead.

The next four qualifications are negative—a ministry leader must not be drunk, violent, quarrelsome, or greedy. The first three in the list seem to build one upon the next just as the positive ones did: being clear-minded leads to self-control, and self-control leads to respectability. Likewise, drunkenness often leads to violence, and violence to

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<sup>53</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 252.

quarrels. The Scriptures warn against drunkenness throughout, especially the New Testament.<sup>54</sup> The drunkard shows the worst of the world's indulgence. Drunkenness leads often to fighting (the word for violent in 3:3 means to strike someone<sup>55</sup>) and quarrels. Therefore, a drunk would not be qualified for church leadership.

The ministry leader must not be a drunken, violent, quarrelsome person, but instead, "gentle." This word describes a special grace required in ministry leaders. They must be approachable, gentle, and a leader of gracious strength. Towner explains, "The context here has human interaction in mind, where in the activity of supervision and leading this quality would express itself in reasonableness, courtesy, and tolerance that involves the ability to give way to others."<sup>56</sup> Those who lead must be able to serve on a team with other leaders and be okay with not always getting their way. Anyone who has served on a committee with an irascible grump knows the value of "sweet reasonableness"<sup>57</sup> for leading a church.

The fourth negative quality to avoid is greed. A ministry leader must not be a lover of money (3:3). This is important since some ministry leaders will have responsibility for managing the Lord's money, often given by those of limited means. A greedy or dishonest leader is a serious threat to the church. Paul specifically mentions greed as a problem with the false teachers in Ephesus. Some false teachers in were "depraved in mind and deprived of truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain" (1 Tim 6:5). Then he warned Timothy that "those who desire to be rich fall into temptation" (6:9).

**A leader's family life.** Paul's list of qualifications next moves on to a leader's family life: "He must manage his own household well, with all dignity, keeping his

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<sup>54</sup> See 1 Cor 5:11; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:18; 1 Thess 5:7; 1 Pet 4:3.

<sup>55</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 176.

<sup>56</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 252.

<sup>57</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 176.



children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" (3:4-5). This home management would include (in this context) being a faithful husband, rearing obedient, faithful children, and caring for aging parents as that is required.<sup>58</sup>

The home is a proving ground for ministry leadership. If a man cannot manage his own family then he should not look to export that leadership into the church. Mounce observes, "What holds true in the home also holds true outside the home. A person's ability to manage the church, which is God's household, will be evident in the managing of his own household."<sup>59</sup> This qualification alone accounts for nearly one third of the material and indicates the high value the Lord places on managing well at home. An overseer's home serves as a measure of his leadership and as a model for those inside and outside of the church community.

**A leader's spiritual maturity.** The third area of qualification the apostle Paul covers is spiritual maturity: "He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil" (3:6). *Recent convert* conveys the idea of something newly planted, tender, or not mature. Fee clarifies that this is a "metaphor in Greek that literally means 'no newly planted person.'"<sup>60</sup> A new convert may fall into two dangers: conceit and condemnation.

Conceit speaks of the confusion (literally to be smoke-headed) and blindness caused by unwarranted pride.<sup>61</sup> A new convert elevated too quickly to a leadership role is liable to pride, which blinds him to his own sin and to what's best for the church. They may be tempted to pursue selfish ends and become a church boss. Their conceit can lead

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<sup>58</sup> See 1 Tim 3:2, 4, 5:4, 8; Titus 1:6

<sup>59</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 177.

<sup>60</sup> Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy Titus*, 83.

<sup>61</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 181.

them to condemnation; in this case, the condemnation of the devil. That is, just as the devil was blinded by pride and fell into sin, so an unqualified church leader who falls into sin because of pride will bring upon himself condemnation. Mounce warns, “A new convert does not belong in a position of authority because the temptations and punishments are great.”<sup>62</sup>

The demands of ministry leadership are great and require preparation. While there is no set time given (and no minimum age for leadership), those who would lead in the church must have enough faith experience to avoid the temptation and condemnation that accompany pride. They must not be easily uprooted. Churches will do well to heed Paul’s warning to young Timothy two chapters after this text: “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands” (5:22). Current leaders should provide a clear process for preparing young leaders, including an evaluation of the humility that marks maturity. Time is on the side of those churches that make deliberate leadership decisions.

**A leader’s reputation with outsiders.** The fourth category of qualification that the apostle Paul raises in 1 Timothy 3 involves the leader’s reputation with those outside of the church. “He must be well thought of by outsiders” (3:7). As with the warning connected with elevating a new believer, so there is a warning here: “That he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil” (3:7). An unqualified leader risks disgrace arising from falling into the devil’s snare.

This concern for an outsiders’ opinion of a ministry leader may seem surprising. Why would it matter what those outside the church think of leadership inside the church? Paul’s point seems to be that faulty leadership would hurt the evangelistic mission of the church. Lea and Griffin note, “If the behavior of the leader does not present a creditable witness, the devil can entrap the church by making outsiders wary of believing the gospel . . . Paul’s implied appeal is that church leaders give no opportunity for unbelievers

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<sup>62</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 181.

genuinely to find fault.”<sup>63</sup> How ministry leaders live has a profound impact inside and outside of the local church. Therefore, the church must seek to develop and deploy leaders who model high moral character. These character qualities are required because ministry leaders serve as living models of maturity and Christian grace for the congregation and the community (1 Tim 4:12).

### **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the biblical and theological foundations for developing ministry leaders in a local church. The chapter focused on Exodus 18, Acts 20, and 1 Timothy 3. Taken together, Moses’ example in Exodus 18, Paul’s challenge to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, and his follow up letter to Timothy paint a picture of the need for qualified spiritual leaders to care for God’s people. Gifted, godly leaders who lead the church toward Great Commission ministry will make a powerful impact on the world and enjoy the favor of God (Matt 28:19-20).

Today’s pastor/teachers must develop others to share ministry work in the local church. Pastors who do all the work of the ministry limit the potential for that church. Therefore, churches should develop a simple, repeatable plan for growing spiritual leaders. That plan should equip potential ministry leaders with the skills to monitor their own spiritual growth, model godliness for the congregation, and move the mission forward. The next chapter will review leadership literature and suggest skills that ministry leaders in the local church should develop to be effective.

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<sup>63</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy Titus*, 113-114.

## CHAPTER 3

### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO DEVELOPING MINISTRY LEADERS

All around the world, each weekend, millions of believers gather in hundreds of thousands of churches to worship, learn, enjoy fellowship, serve, and share the gospel. Believers do this in response to Jesus' command to make, baptize, and teach disciples, and with the firm assurance that he is with them to the very end of the age. Every church that gathers needs ministry leaders. Nearly all these local church leaders are volunteers without seminary training, yet the success of the ministry will rest largely on their shoulders as they lead volunteer teams. Therefore, local churches need to develop additional leaders to grow and thrive in their mission. Leadership coach Mac Lake makes this point, "*The long-term health and spiritual vitality of any church is dependent on leadership development.*"<sup>1</sup>

The complexity of churches today adds another layer to the need for leadership development. Week after week churches provide worship multi-media using complex technology, robust ministry for children, students, men/women, special needs, and communications. Churches do this at least fifty-two times per year. In addition, churches must care for the congregation, share Christ with the community, and extend the gospel around the world through mission partnerships. The demands seem overwhelming, but they provide opportunities to develop believers who can serve the mission of the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Mac Lake, *The Multiplication Effect* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2020), 25, emphasis original.

This is biblical.<sup>2</sup> As Lake writes, “The Church is uniquely set apart to develop and deploy leaders for the glory of God and the advancement of the gospel.”<sup>3</sup>

Church leaders have long recognized that multiplying leaders moves forward the church’s mission (Matt 28:16-20). Oswald Sanders wrote his classic *Spiritual Leadership* in 1967. His call for leaders still rings true: “If the world is to hear the church’s voice today, leaders are needed who are authoritative, spiritual, and sacrificial. . . . Churches grow in every way when they are guided by strong, spiritual leaders with the touch of the supernatural radiating from their service.”<sup>4</sup> Churches have always needed those kinds of leaders, perhaps never more than today.

Multiplying healthy leaders not only serves the church’s mission in the world, but also provides for congregational care. Pastor Thabiti Anyabwile points out, “The Lord designed the church in such a way that it requires godly leaders. The sheep need shepherds. Without shepherds the sheep wander into all sorts of dangers and hurts, and the Savior grieves over their aimless and vulnerable condition (Matt. 9:36). Sheep tending is a good thing.”<sup>5</sup> Churches that long to be healthy inside and reach their communities outside must develop more ministry leaders.

The previous chapter examined a biblical perspective on leadership from the examples of Moses, Jesus, and Paul. I argued that those texts require that elders be men of highest character. Those who serve as leaders in other ministries are to be people of high character as well. This chapter will review leadership literature from both secular and Christian perspectives to find themes common to effective leadership. Based on that review, this chapter will argue that churches should prioritize development for ministry

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<sup>2</sup> See for example Eph 4:11-16.

<sup>3</sup> Eric Geiger and Keven Peck, *Designed to Lead* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2016), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Oswald J. Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 18.

<sup>5</sup> Thabiti Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 52-53.

leaders in three areas: high personal character, the ability to understand and communicate a clear purpose, and the skills needs to build and lead a team. Finally, this chapter will describe the current leadership process at Crossroads Church, where I pastor, so that the reader understands the context in which leaders will serve.

### **Surveying Leadership Literature**

Leadership is a hot commodity these days. Bookstore shelves are lined with leadership books for business, education, sports, the home, and the church. Academia has an increasing interest in the art and science of leadership. Researcher Peter Northouse observes, “Leadership is a topic with universal appeal: in the popular press and academic research literature, much has been written about leadership. . . . It is a highly valued phenomenon that is very complex.”<sup>6</sup> Popular biographers often write with an eye toward how their subjects modeled leadership.<sup>7</sup> Christian publishing shows the same interest in leadership in the church.<sup>8</sup>

Before examining specific elements, leadership should be defined, which is no simple task. Literature from academia, business, and Christian ministry describe many styles of leadership, including those that focus on traits, skills, behaviors, authenticity, servanthood, and adaptation. But leadership is more than a personality style or specific set of behaviors. Effective leaders come in many shapes, sizes, and experiences. While there are shades of difference, scholars generally agree that leadership involves influencing others toward a goal.

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<sup>6</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice*, 8th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2019), 1, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Consider Ronald C. White, *American Ulysses* (New York: Random House, 2016); Stephen Oates, *With Malice Toward None* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994); Wess Roberts, *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun* (New York: Warner Books, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> An online search of Christian Book Distributors lists 54 books on its first page of “leadership resources.” Christian Book, “Leadership,” accessed June 9, 2020, <https://www.christianbook.com/page/personal-growth/leadership>.

After surveying 120 years of leadership literature, Northouse summarizes: “(a) Leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influence, (c) leadership occurs in groups, and (d) leadership involves common goals.”<sup>9</sup> Many Christian writers have also defined leadership as influence. Sanders writes, “Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others to follow his or her lead.”<sup>10</sup> I define a leader as one who influences others to achieve a worthy goal.<sup>11</sup>

Irrespective of personality, education, or experience, effective leaders share certain qualities and behaviors. Writers group these qualities differently, but largely agree on certain basic characteristics of effective leadership, including modeling character, knowing and communicating the organization’s purpose, and the skill to build teams.<sup>12</sup> This is not an exhaustive list of leadership qualities, but these are fundamental to ministry leaders. Greg Sharf and Arthur Kok, writing in *The New Elder’s Handbook*, point out that these categories are also common in the Scriptures: “There you have them again: character, knowledge, and skill. Elders are meant to exemplify what all Christians should aim for. We are to be models to the flock as well as teachers of it.”<sup>13</sup> The handbook focuses on the role of elder, but these elements also apply to those who lead in other ministries, since elders are responsible to model godliness for the church.

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<sup>9</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 27.

<sup>11</sup> The following books have influenced my definition: James Kouzes and Barry Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 6th ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017); Northouse, *Leadership*; and Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*.

<sup>12</sup> The following books, written from a variety of perspectives, at some level cover character, purpose, and specific skills that leaders must bring to their organizations: Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors* (Boulder, CO: Jim Collins.com, 2005), 1, 32-33; Stephen R. Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 46-62; Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 20; Patrick Lencioni, *The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons, 2000), 140-80; Burt Nanus, *Visionary Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 15, 156; Northouse, *Leadership*, 3-5, Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010), 23-32; Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 27.

<sup>13</sup> Greg Sharf and Arthur Kok, *The New Elder’s Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 14.

I group these qualities into three broad categories: the responsibility to model character, ability to clarify and communicate purpose, and mastery of basic leadership skills needed to build a team.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, a leadership curriculum for ministry leaders should focus on what that leader should be, know, and do. The *be* of leadership development should focus a leader's responsibility to model high character. The *know* should teach the value of a leader understanding and communicating the purpose of the church. The *do* should teach a leader a few basics leadership skills required to build and strengthen their ministry team. Mastering these elements will contribute to a leader's effectiveness. The next section will examine these three categories in detail.

### **Leaders Must Model High Character**

Leaders in every setting should be people of high character because they serve as role models for those they lead. This is especially true in settings where relationships are intimate and long-term. Stephen Covey, writing in his classic *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, argues that character is more important over time than simply possessing leadership skills:

You can pick up quick, easy techniques that may work in short-term situations. But secondary traits alone have no permanent worth in long-term relationships. Eventually, if there isn't deep integrity and fundamental character strength, the challenges of life will cause the true motives to surface and human relationship failure will replace short-term success. . . . It is character that communicates most eloquently.<sup>15</sup>

Covey insists that leaders should develop inner character before focusing on leadership skills. He calls character *primary greatness*, while the recognition that comes from talent

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<sup>14</sup> The curriculum that I taught as part of this project was organized around this three-fold understanding of the leadership role. Chaps. 1-2 deal with leadership character, chaps. 3-4 cover the gospel and purpose of the church, and chaps. 5-6 suggest traits and skills of effective leaders. The curriculum is available in appendix 3.

<sup>15</sup> Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, 21.



and achievement is *secondary greatness*: “If you want the secondary greatness of recognized talent, focus first on primary greatness of character.”<sup>16</sup>

Academic and business research reveals that a leader’s character has great influence on those within any organization. After surveying hundreds of leadership studies over decades of research, Northouse determined, “Leaders with integrity inspire confidence in others because they can be trusted to do what they say they are going to do.”<sup>17</sup> He concludes that leaders with high character have an outsized influence on those they lead: “Because of their influence, leaders play a major role in establishing the ethical climate of their organizations.”<sup>18</sup>

James Kouzes and Barry Posner’s leadership classic, *The Leadership Challenge*, is now in its sixth printing. Over the years the authors interviewed tens of thousands of business leaders and employees. Their data confirms the value of character for the leader: “In every survey we’ve conducted, honesty is selected more often than any other leadership characteristic. Overall, it emerges as the single most important factor in the leader-constituent relationship. The percentages vary, but the final ranking does not. First and foremost, people want a leader who is honest.”<sup>19</sup> Kouzes and Posner suggest that when it comes to leading teams, “the power of the leader’s personal example can’t be stressed enough.”<sup>20</sup> Popular leadership expert Patrick Lencioni points out, “This point is critical—no one but the head of an organization can make it healthy.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, 43.

<sup>17</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 25.

<sup>18</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 342.

<sup>19</sup> Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 73.

<sup>21</sup> Lencioni, *The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive*, xv.

Secular leadership literature mostly focuses on the value character adds to leadership without agreeing on a source or standard for that character beyond acting in alignment with personal values.<sup>22</sup> This approach to leadership character raises the concern that charismatic leaders could lead an organization astray if their values are flawed. Northouse explains, “If the values to which the leader is moving his or her followers are not better, and if the set of human values is not more redeeming, then the leadership must be challenged.”<sup>23</sup> Northouse does not, however, give any basis for determining which values are better or more redeeming than others. This weakness may reflect a reluctance to acknowledge moral authority outside of culture. The Christian church has the advantage of Jesus Christ’s moral example and authority.

### **Ministry Leaders Should Live Out Their Identity in Jesus Christ**

What is true about a leader’s character in a business setting is also true in the local church. Churches (and individual ministries) reflect the character of those who lead because leaders set the pace. The importance of character for those who lead ministry teams grows out of both the nature and mission of the church. Jesus established the church to function like an extended family whose members are related by a shared faith (Matt 12:50; Eph 2:18-22), which brings the intimacy of close relationships. A leader’s character will be observed closely, not from a corporate distance.

In the church, leaders are not superior; they are fellow family members called to be role models who serve those they lead. In the first century, the apostle Paul challenged his young protégé, Timothy, to “set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity . . . so that all may see your progress” (1 Tim 4:12, 15). The responsibility to model character towers over the development of leadership

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<sup>22</sup> See for example, Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 73-75; Northouse, *Leadership*, 180-82.

<sup>23</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 183.

skills for those who serve the local church. A focus on the ministry leader's character should guide the development and use of their leadership skills. This will help guard against unusually skilled leaders manipulating or dominating the very ones they are called to serve.

Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck highlight the priority of character in a ministry leader: "Foremost in a leader's development, in any venue, is the stringent testing of his or her character. . . . This is even more critical in leading in a church than leading anywhere else."<sup>24</sup> Misuse of leadership can harm a church, damage relationships, and set back ministry for years.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, ministry leaders advance the mission to make disciples of all nations when they model the power of the gospel to change lives.<sup>26</sup> Jesus called his followers to "let your light shine before others, so that they may see you good works and give glory to your Father" (Matt 5:16). Believers are reminded that they are "light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Eph 5:1). Peter urged believers to live in such a way that they "proclaim the excellencies of him who called out of darkness into his marvelous light . . . Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable" (Pet 2:9,12). The church's mission to make disciples is furthered when believers live out their identity as redeemed people. Those believers who lead ministry in the local church do not have to pretend to be holy, they should simply live on the outside what is true on the inside.<sup>27</sup>

Living out good character is especially important for ministry leaders since they are expected to model Christlikeness for those they serve. Peter Scazzero, writing in

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<sup>24</sup> Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 93.

<sup>25</sup> This danger was realized in my own Chicagoland area. Several mega-church pastors have recently been removed or stepped aside for abuse of power.

<sup>26</sup> In chap. 2 I argued that the Great Commission provides the purpose for the church.

<sup>27</sup> John 15:5; Rom 6:6-7, 12-15; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 5:17, 21; Gal 4:3-7; Eph 2:4-10; Col 2:6-7; 1 Tim 1:12-17; Heb 7:25; 9:14, 10:22-23; 1 Pet 1:3-5, 2:24; Rev 5:9-10.

response to many ministry failures, challenges church leaders to model character: “Lasting change in churches and organizations requires men and women committed to leading from a deep and transformed inner life. We lead more out of who we are than out of what we do.”<sup>28</sup> John Maxwell puts it succinctly: “Having good character does not ensure that you will be successful in life or leadership. But you can be sure that having poor character will eventually derail you personally and professionally.”<sup>29</sup> Perhaps Richard Foster said it best in his spiritual classic, *Celebration of Discipline*: “Superficiality is the curse of our age. . . . The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.”<sup>30</sup>

A leader’s character deeply impacts the members of a ministry team and the church they serve. While skills are important (as I argue later in this chapter), those skills alone are not enough to provide healthy leadership within the church. Therefore, ministry leadership training must begin with character—what a leader should be, because character is essential to leadership. Experienced pastors say “amen” to that.

Researchers also recognize the primacy of character for church leaders. Joshua Patterson of the Village Church in Dallas writes, “The primary attribute people look for in leadership is not a skill, but a virtue.”<sup>31</sup> Character is especially important in the local church where the purpose is to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). Kouzes and Posner’s conclude, “No matter what the setting, everyone wants to be fully confident in their leaders, and to be fully

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<sup>28</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 48.

<sup>29</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader within You 2.0* (Nashville: HarperCollins, 2018), 52.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2018), 1.

<sup>31</sup> Joshua Rice Patterson, “Leveraging the Multi-Site Church Approach as a Long-Term Church Planting Strategy at the Village Church in Dallas-Fort Worth” (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 40.

confident they have to believe that their leaders are people of strong character and strong integrity.”<sup>32</sup> In his excellent study on ministry leaders, Thabiti Anyabwile writes that churches must seek men and women “whose inner and outer lives are sewn together by integrity and Christlikeness.”<sup>33</sup> Anyabwile continues, “Integrity in church leaders is vital to church health.”<sup>34</sup>

Ministry leaders reveal their character when they live out their redeemed identity in the intimate context of the local church. Leaders who live out that character advance the church’s mission to make disciples of all nations. Leaders also reveal their character by how they see their roles. Effective ministry leaders embrace the responsibility to do the work of ministry and care for those they serve, while ineffective leaders may focus on the perceived rewards of their leadership position, such as attending leadership meetings, making decisions, and gaining the respect of church members.<sup>35</sup> But ministry leadership often leads to frustration, hurting volunteers, unwanted conflict, and dealing with constant shortages of resources. Leaders with character embrace that thankless work more than they seek leadership rewards.

When two of Jesus’ first followers requested high offices in his kingdom, he replied that the Father appoints believers to their roles. He taught his disciples that the pathway to leadership in his kingdom leads through service and sacrifice: “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt 20:27-28). The leadership Jesus described demands that ministry leaders serve and sacrifice for others, not angle for position or

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<sup>32</sup> James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 27.

<sup>33</sup> Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons*, 57.

<sup>34</sup> Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons*, 60.

<sup>35</sup> See Patrick Lencioni, *The Motive* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2020), 169-70.

reward. Effective ministry leaders should humbly and gladly serve those under their care, develop them spiritually, and challenge them to pursue mission with vigor.

### **Ministry Leaders Should Be Humble**

There are many ways to describe the character ministry leaders should model, but humility broadly captures the essence. Humility grows when leaders understand that God called them to the ministry they lead. Humble leaders understand that it is God’s ministry, not theirs, and that they serve his ends, not their own. Sanders makes exactly this point: “Humility is the hallmark of the spiritual leader. . . . The spiritual leader will choose the hidden path of sacrificial service and approval of the Lord over the flamboyant self-advertising of the world.”<sup>36</sup> Such leadership is rare and valuable.

Researchers have long recognized that the best leaders are ambitious for a cause, not their own advancement. Jim Collins observes that these kind of leaders “are ambitious first and foremost for the cause, the movement, the mission, the work—not themselves—and they have the will to do whatever it takes (*whatever* it takes) to make good on that ambition.”<sup>37</sup> Humility submits ambition to a cause. For ministry leaders, the cause is Jesus’ mission, not their own advancement or recognition (1 Cor 9:24-27).

In a ministry setting, understanding calling clarifies and fuels submission to the cause. While a full discussion of calling is beyond the scope of this chapter, ministry leaders should understand that God calls every believer to serve others, while some believers sense a call to exercise their gifts within a specific area of ministry.<sup>38</sup> Believers should seek clarity about their calling by answering questions such as, What do you love doing? What are your natural abilities? What are your spiritual gifts? What breaks your heart? What has mentor or trusted friend said you are good at doing? Where have you had

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<sup>36</sup> Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 61.

<sup>37</sup> Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, 11, emphasis original.

<sup>38</sup> See for example Gal 5:13-14; Eph 2:8-10; Phil 3:13-14; 1 Tim 3:1; 1 Pet 5:1-5.

success?<sup>39</sup> Whatever their specific calling, effective ministry leaders model humility by serving the Lord’s agenda under his authority. They do not serve for their own comfort or the rewards they think that leadership may provide them.

Humble leaders also recognize the contribution of those they serve. These leaders share credit for success, rather than spread blame for failure. When a ministry enjoys success and growth, humble leaders look out the window and point to the volunteers who contributed to the growth. When a ministry experiences failure, humble leaders look in the mirror and take ownership for their part—they do not blame others.<sup>40</sup> This kind of humility builds ownership and high performance among those who serve.

In summary, effective ministry leaders model character by reflecting Jesus’ redeeming work in their lives. They make it clear that they are serving the Lord Jesus Christ and the church he died to save, not themselves. This kind of humble ministry leader shares credit. Like the apostle Paul, they testify, “What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor 4:5). This kind of character builds trust among those a leader serves and tends toward long-term effectiveness.

### **Leaders Must Understand and Communicate Purpose**

Purpose is a powerful thing. It channels effort, unifies people, reduces the fear of change, and clarifies success. Next to character, knowing and communicating purpose are two of the most important skills a leader can develop. Purpose drives vision—a clear picture of where the ministry is going. Burt Nanus observes, “There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See session 5 of the Leadership Development curriculum in appendix 3.

<sup>40</sup> Adapted from Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 35.

<sup>41</sup> Nanus, *Visionary Leadership*, 3.

Purpose is so powerful that leaders must clearly understand the purpose of the organizations they serve. Otherwise, those leaders are not qualified to lead. The best leaders also intentionally communicate that purpose to those they lead because understanding purpose strengthens leaders and motivates volunteers. In addition, clarity of purpose provides an advantage to the church in working with volunteers.

### **Understanding Purpose Strengthens Leaders**

Understanding purpose equips, inspires, and strengthens a leader. Kouzes and Posner’s research demonstrated that “feeling a strong sense of purpose—particularly one that benefits others and not just yourself—has a profound impact on your performance and your health.”<sup>42</sup> Understanding purpose also increases a leader’s performance. Kouzes and Posner insist, “Meaning and purpose matter whether you are seeking better grades, persistence in your efforts, greater personal well-being, or improved organizational performance. As a leader, if you want to perform at your best, it’s incumbent that you search inside yourself and discover what gives your work and life meaning and purpose.”<sup>43</sup>

Understanding purpose helps ministry leaders endure through the inevitable frustrations and failure of ministry, including having motivations questioned. The apostle Paul was imprisoned for living out his purpose, but he did not consider his time in prison as a failure. Far from it, he considered hardship one more opportunity to serve his purpose. He wrote from prison to his friends in Philippi: “I want you to know brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel” (Phil 1:12). Believers who are convinced that Jesus is at work in their hardships will be well-equipped to face the challenges of ministry leadership in the local church.

Understanding purpose also helps ministry leaders to evaluate the success or failure of ministry efforts and resources. It is easy to gauge success or failure too soon or

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<sup>42</sup> Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 106.

<sup>43</sup> Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 106.



too narrowly (1 Cor 4:5). This premature evaluation can lead to discouragement or pride. However, church leaders who see their difficulties in the light of the greater purpose they serve will be resilient in their own service and powerful influences on those they lead. Therefore, ministry leaders should understand their ministry's purpose *and* communicate that purpose to those they serve.

Purpose inspires appropriate risk-taking, which is fundamental to leadership and vital to growth. Sanders challenges ministry leaders to pursue purpose with courageous vision: "Vision leads to venture, and history is on the side of venturesome faith. The person of vision takes fresh steps of faith across gullies and chasms, not 'playing it safe' but neither taking foolish risks."<sup>44</sup> Ministry leaders who lead purposefully should be prepared to take appropriate risks in pursuit of the purpose.

### **Understanding Purpose Motivates Volunteers**

Understanding purpose inspires effort, raises motivation, and defines success for a leader and a ministry team. Achieving a ministry's purpose will require concerted and sustained effort, which is why communicating purpose is a top priority for leaders. John Maxwell identifies vision—that which results when a purpose is achieved—as fundamental to leadership:

Vision is the indispensable quality of leadership. Without it, a team's energy ebbs, people begin to miss deadlines, team members' personal agendas begin to dominate, production falls, and eventually team members scatter. With it, the team's energy surges, people meet their deadlines, personal agendas fade into the background, production increases, and the people working together become a thriving team.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, ministry leaders who understand and clearly communicate vision to their team are likely to raise volunteer morale and effectiveness.

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<sup>44</sup> Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 57.

<sup>45</sup> Maxwell, *Developing the Leader within You 2.0*, 165.

Research backs up the power of purpose for volunteers. Volunteers need clarity about how their efforts achieve purpose. Northouse studied the impact of purpose on volunteers and noted, “When an organization has a clear vision, it is easier for people within the organization to learn how they fit in with the overall direction of the organization and even the society in general.”<sup>46</sup> When team members understand “why,” they are more willing to do “what” is required to achieve the purpose.

Purpose answers the question: “Why do we exist?” Therefore, a ministry’s purpose should be well understood by those who serve in the church. This understanding is particularly important for a church because achieving that purpose will demand effort from multiple volunteer teams. Those teams pursue purpose through tasks often viewed as mundane, such as staffing nurseries, training greeters, developing budgets, and managing facilities. Those who lead must connect their effort with the ministry’s purpose. As Geiger and Peck insist, “Every leader in a local church needs to be a champion for mission.”<sup>47</sup>

### **Understanding Purpose Gives the Church an Advantage**

Interestingly, churches have a built-in advantage for motivating volunteers. Collins recognized that non-profits (what he termed “the social sectors”) benefited from his leadership book, *Good to Great*. But non-profit organizations are fundamentally different than businesses because they do not have a profit motive. This so perplexed him that he studied how non-profits differ from business. In response, Collins wrote *Good to Great and the Social Sectors* to summarize his findings. His surprising conclusion was that non-profits are better than businesses at volunteerism: “The social sectors have one compelling advantage: desperate craving for meaning in our lives. Purity of mission—be

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<sup>46</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 175.

<sup>47</sup> Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 97.

it about educating young people, connecting people to God . . . has the power to ignite passion and commitment.”<sup>48</sup>

Recently the church I pastor, Crossroads Community, adopted a new campus when a sixty-year old church requested to join our church family. In preparation for restarting Village Bible Church (VBC) as our Village Bible campus, we renovated the entire building, including new paint and carpet on the lower level. A few weeks later, during the coronavirus pandemic, I received a phone call early in the morning. Overnight, a thunderstorm deluged our area with 5.5 inches of rain.

The VBC campus had flooded for the first time in their sixty-year history, and the campus pastor was on vacation in Florida. I called two staff members who got forty volunteers there within two hours—during the pandemic. By noon, the entire lower level was cleared of furniture and carpet and volunteers were cleaning equipment. By 2:00 p.m., we had finished the work and the disaster company began restoration.

Over a break for lunch (our volunteer team also fed all forty workers), VBC’s former chairman of the board told me that he had never seen so many volunteers, or this much enthusiasm, for such a thankless job in all his time at VBC. He was surprised at the energy and good humor of the volunteers who came from three different campuses. I replied that this was because the volunteers understood that they were advancing the gospel, not simply cleaning up soggy carpet and furniture. Purpose drove volunteer engagement.

I had just completed teaching the leadership curriculum from this project at VBC when the flood happened. The material covered purpose in several sessions. Some from the new campus were able to quote the purpose of the church to me as we carried out flood-soaked carpet. It was a living lesson in the value of communicating purpose. Those who lead ministries must capitalize on the built-in advantage churches have by

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<sup>48</sup> Collins, *Good to Great*, 16.

identifying and communicating the purpose for the ministries they lead. This will powerfully motivate those they serve. The alternative is a tragedy, as Geiger concludes; “Church after church sits idle and aging because the mission of God is not front and center.”<sup>49</sup>

### **Leaders Must Develop Basic Skills**

Thus far, I have argued that leaders must demonstrate character. Further, leaders must understand and communicate purpose to those they lead. In addition to those disciplines, ministry leaders should develop and deploy a few basic leadership skills needed to strengthen their ministry team. These skills include the ability to understand what they read in the Bible, build teams, lead constructive change, and persevere. While these are not the only skills a ministry leader needs, these four have the potential to add significant value for a local church.

### **Understand God’s Word**

The Bible speaks to human beings’ deepest hopes and needs. Knowing and living God’s Word grows faith, comforts, instructs, equips, nourishes, and guides the one who reads and believes God’s Word. In the Bible, believers learn about God’s character and his work in history. They see the unfolding of God’s magnificent plan for creation, redemption, restoration, and consummation. The Scriptures teach believers their part in God’s plan. Most importantly, the Bible proclaims that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only savior.

Because of the great value God’s Word brings, ministry leaders should be able to read and understand God’s Word. This skill holds value for believers, whatever their leadership role—business, sports, education, or the home—but reading and understanding God’s Word is especially valuable for those who lead within the church. For example,

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<sup>49</sup> Geiger and Peck, *Designed to Lead*, 120-21.

knowing the Great Commission motivates a church's efforts and limits its focus. Applying biblical qualifications for ministry volunteers protects ministry leaders from the temptation to favor heavy givers or install otherwise unqualified people who insist on influential roles.

God's Word fuels passion, fills souls, enlightens minds, equips skills, reveals motives, and guards hearts. The Scriptures also provide proven principles to help with volunteers' frequent personal or ministry questions. Nothing will strengthen a leader's grasp of Christian truth like reading and understanding the Scriptures. And nothing will build leaders' confidence like practicing what they read.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, training for ministry leaders should include basic instruction in how to understand the Bible—what scholars call hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics is the discipline of understanding the Bible. Henry Virkler defines hermeneutics as “*the science and art of biblical interpretation*. Hermeneutics is considered a science because it has rules, and these rules can be classified in an orderly system. It is considered an art because communication is flexible.”<sup>51</sup> Not every ministry leader needs to know original languages or textual issues, but all ministry leaders should be equipped with the basic tools they need to understand what they read in God's Word. A simple teaching plan for training leaders should cover the hermeneutical disciplines of observation, interpretation, and application.

As part of a hermeneutic study, ministry leaders should understand something about the nature of general revelation—God reveals truth about himself and his world through creation, history, and conscience. However, those avenues provide little information about a relationship with God. Therefore, God revealed specific truth about

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<sup>50</sup> Pss 19:7-14, 119:9-11, 18, 97-104, 130; Prov 4:23; John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12.

<sup>51</sup> Henry Virkler and Karelyne Ayayo, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 16, emphasis original. See also Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970).

himself and this world in the Scriptures and in his son, Jesus Christ.<sup>52</sup> This specific truth is called “Special Revelation.” Special Revelation tells the reader that Jesus came to seek and save the lost, turn away God’s righteous wrath at the sins of the whole world, and that he established, commissioned, promised his presence with, and ultimate victory for his church. The Bible reveals the depth, breadth, and persistence of God’s love, and the command to share that good news with all of creation.<sup>53</sup>

**A three-step process.** Ministry leaders do not need to be overwhelmed with technical aspects of hermeneutics; rather, they should learn a simple strategy to understand God’s Word. The curriculum in this project teaches a three-step process: observation, interpretation, and application.<sup>54</sup> These steps, when followed carefully and in order, will increase the reader’s understanding of God’s Word. Like most new skills, leaders will need to follow the steps painstakingly at first, but once they get the hang of it, these steps become easier to follow.

*Observation* asks what a text says. Observation is the discipline of reading the text slowly and carefully to discover what is there; what it says. This is the first step to understanding a Bible text. Readers should consider genre and context, especially the verses immediately surrounding the passage. Readers should also understand how the passage fits into the chapter, book, and larger message of the Bible as a whole.

Once readers gather information, they are ready to interpret the passage.

*Interpretation* asks what a text means. Interpretation is the discipline of determining what the text means within the context. Robert Plummer writes, “Interpretation assumes there

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<sup>52</sup> Ps 19:1-6, 7-14; Rom 1:18-23; Heb 1:1-4.

<sup>53</sup> Matt 16:8, 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 19:10; 1 John 1:9-2:2.

<sup>54</sup> This three-step process is advocated by many interpreters. For example, Howard Hendricks, *Living by the Book* (Chicago: Moody, 1991); or Henry Virkler, *Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981).

is, in fact, a proper and improper meaning of a text and care must be taken not to misrepresent the meaning.”<sup>55</sup>

Ministry leaders should not ask the question often posed in small group Bible studies: “What does this mean to *me*?” Instead, leaders should ask the better question: “What does this mean?” As far as possible the reader should try to determine what the text meant to the original recipients. The more Bible readers understands what the original message meant, the more likely they are to get the correct interpretation.<sup>56</sup>

While this process may seem overwhelming, leaders should be given appropriate tools to assist their discovery. They should consider what Bible scholars say and consult tools such as a study Bible, Bible dictionary, concordance (a list of Bible words and where they occur in the text), or encyclopedia (short articles on Bible words and themes). Many helpful and reliable Bible study resources are available online for free.<sup>57</sup> Ministry leaders will be delighted at how often they arrive at the same conclusion as a commentary writer, but they did the work by the sweat of their own brow.

The third step in this hermeneutic process is *application*. Application asks what a text expects a reader to do. Application is the discipline of discovering how the meaning of the passage applies to the reader’s situation. God’s Word expects the reader to obey, and God’s Word promises great blessing for those who do obey.<sup>58</sup>

Jesus illustrated the value of doing, and not just hearing God’s Word when he told a story about two men who built houses. One built the foundation on sand and the

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<sup>55</sup> Robert Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 79.

<sup>56</sup> It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine the multiple approaches to hermeneutics. My position is that a reader can determine, to some extent, what the writer intended the original recipients to understand.

<sup>57</sup> See <https://www.esv.org/subscription/>, or <https://www.biblica.com/niv-bible/> or <https://www.bible.com/en-GB> for free resources. See <https://www.logos.com/> for an example of a paid site.

<sup>58</sup> Ps 119:165; John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12; Rev 22:7.

other built the foundation on a rock. When the storms came, the house on rock stood firm, while the house built on sand collapsed. In his application of the story, Jesus compared those who listen, but do not obey to the “foolish man who built his house on the sand” (Matt 7:26).

Readers should ask application questions such as, “What does the passage teach me about God’s will or his ways?” “Are there promises or warnings I should act upon in this text?” “Does this passage demand I act on my attitudes, actions, relationships, beliefs?” Application should build a bridge from the original text to the reader’s world. Scholar John Stott argues that application seeks to “enable God’s revealed truth to flow out of the Scriptures into the lives of men and women today.”<sup>59</sup>

Understanding the Bible inspires and equips church leaders to serve others. God’s Word can protect ministry leaders from blindly embracing or rejecting current cultural movements that threaten to detour from the church’s purpose and alienate members of the church and community. Ministry leaders who can read and understand the Scriptures strengthen the church. Therefore, churches that are serious about training ministry leaders should be intentional about teaching them to understand the Bible.

### **Build Teams**

Building teams is a second skill that a ministry leader should learn. If the work of ministry is going to be accomplished in the local church, it is going to be accomplished by individual believers working together as a team to move forward the mission to make, baptize, and teach disciples.

The ministry leader’s task is no different than a pastor’s in this sense, except that a ministry leader serves a specific ministry rather than the entire congregation. Smart pastors know that they multiply their leadership when they develop additional leaders to

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<sup>59</sup> John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 138.



bear the burden of ministry. Sanders reminds leaders that “to succeed in getting things done through others is the highest type of leadership.”<sup>60</sup>

In fact, senior leadership, such as pastors and elders, must commit to developing additional ministry leaders, otherwise a leadership development culture is unlikely to take hold within the church. Village Church of Dallas pastor Joshua Patterson writes, “Leadership development is intentional not accidental. . . . If leadership development is ever going to be a cultural marker, it must be championed, modeled, and celebrated by the senior leadership.”<sup>61</sup> The commitment to raise additional leaders must flow outward from staff and elders toward the volunteers who lead ministry within the congregation.

While many of these volunteer ministry leaders complain about their responsibility to build teams, effective leaders recognize this as a valuable task. They recognize that the church has many advantages in building volunteer teams, especially the deep longing of every human to belong, to use their heart’s passion and their hand’s skills to make a lasting difference.<sup>62</sup>

The church also possesses the gifts of the Spirit among its members. Further, the Bible teaches that there is spiritual unity and equal standing among all races and genders in the Body of Christ.<sup>63</sup> Finally, Jesus promises to be with, protect, intercede, build up, and guide believers.<sup>64</sup> Understanding and utilizing these resources empower ministry leaders.

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<sup>60</sup> Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 137.

<sup>61</sup> Patterson, “Leveraging the Multi-Site Church Approach,” 56.

<sup>62</sup> See Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, 16.

<sup>63</sup> This does not deny that there are specific gender or ministry roles within the church. Nor does this reference deny that there are real conflicts over doctrine and practice within the church. However, the Scriptures teach that all are redeemed by faith in Jesus Christ regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity. And all share the full inheritance as adopted sons of God (Rom 8:14, 16, 19; Gal 3:7, 14, 25-29, 4:1-7, 5:1; Eph 4:1-7; Rev 5:9-10).

<sup>64</sup> Matt 28:20; Rom 12:6-8; Gal 3:26-29; Eph 2:14-22.

Ministry leaders should leverage these formidable resources to build healthy teams. As Peter Scazzero advocates,

Creating an emotionally healthy culture and building a healthy team are among the primary tasks for every leader, whether that leader is a senior pastor, para-church ministry department head, a nonprofit or a marketplace executive, a church board member or a small group leader. And the task for *Christian* leaders is even more demanding because the kind of culture and teams we create are to be radically different than those of the world.<sup>65</sup>

Building healthy teams holds great value for the local church. And building healthy teams requires leaders who can do three things: raise the value of the mission, guard the gate, and continually coach volunteers.

**Raise the value.** Good leaders build strong teams by raising the value of the ministry. They know that telling volunteers, “This is easy” is an ineffective recruiting tool. Leaders will build a stronger team by challenging volunteers. The best ministry leaders tell volunteers, “This will be really demanding, but it is one of the most important things to which you will ever dedicate your time and talent.”

After recruiting committed teams, ministry leaders must pastor their teams through success and failure. These leaders care about the health and growth of their volunteers as much as achieving ministry ends. They build up their team members so that the ministry is accomplished, and the church strengthened.

**Guard the gate.** Leaders must constantly guard the front gate of their ministry. Guarding the gate means that leaders must recruit with an eye toward the chemistry of the team. Just getting any warm body will not do. Long-time pastor Larry Osborne reminds ministry leaders that “the best time to remove a problem player is before they have a place on the team.”<sup>66</sup> Ministry volunteers must understand and agree with the purpose of the ministry. Those who bring a different agenda will likely get sideways fast and cause

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<sup>65</sup> Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 213.

<sup>66</sup> Osborne, *Sticky Teams*, 48.

needless conflict for the team. Therefore, leaders must gauge a volunteer's willingness to embrace and advance the ministry's purpose before deploying them onto the team.

**Coach.** Once deployed, effective ministry leaders coach volunteers with high instruction and high support. New volunteers need clear instructions (what, when, where, how often, with what equipment?). Simply deploying a volunteer without clarifying purpose, expectations, and rewards is not fair. Effective leaders know that they must trust but verify.<sup>67</sup>

After ministry leaders delegate, they must continue coaching their volunteers in real time by quickly instructing, correcting, and encouraging. This creates a ministry culture of truth-telling with grace. This also raises the value of moving volunteers to another area of ministry that better fits their willingness and abilities.<sup>68</sup> Such moves should be seen by both the ministry leader and team member as a success, not a failure. Delegating will build a ministry team; delegating well will build a great team.

### **Lead Constructive Change**

Leading constructive change is a third skill that ministry leaders should learn. While it is true that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8), everything else changes. Change is one of God's most powerful tools for gospel advance. He loves change. “Behold I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isa 43:19). Sensitive ministry leaders look for God's hand during times of turmoil or change. God may be accomplishing his greatest work during times of rapid change.

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<sup>67</sup> Ronald Reagan said this about the Soviet Union at a news conference on December 8, 1987. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=As6y5eI01XE>

<sup>68</sup> I call this the “Hire slow; fire fast” principle. It applies to volunteers as surely as to hires. This practice requires great grace and skill, but holds the promise of avoiding the always the painful process of removing a troublesome volunteer.

The church's mission began with the change of a human soul (Acts 2:17) and will end with the most dramatic change since creation: "Behold, I am making all things new" (Rev 21:5). Since the church leads God's mission to redeem the lost and welcome back those far from him, and since that mission requires nimble ministry, change should be a normal part of ministry leadership.

Constructive change should further the church's mission, while minimizing collateral damage. Leading constructive change that benefits a church will require that leaders to think of purpose first, seek permission more than buy-in, and communicate constantly.

**Purpose drives change.** Before attempting change, leaders should ask, "How will this change serve our purpose?" Recently, our church removed pews and added chairs at a newly added campus. Many rightly asked why we were making this change. When we explained that this provided a place for those in wheelchairs to worship, they embraced it. When we added that we could now enjoy meals on the main floor without navigating steep stairs to get to the fellowship hall, they were so happy that they volunteered to help remove the pews. People who understand how proposed changes serve the larger purpose are more likely to embrace change.

**Seek permission.** Leaders who want to bring change often seek buy-in. That is, they want the entire congregation to support the proposed change. But the church may not have enough information to embrace change, they may be late adopters, they may not like change, or the church government may make changing official policy difficult. This built-in resistance to change can discourage a leader and derail the potential benefits from change.

Because of these challenges to change through buy-in, effective ministry leaders may choose to simply seek permission, rather than asking for buy-in. Permission asks the church if we can try something, even if not everyone supports the venture. In fact,

permission acknowledges that some are likely to oppose the suggested change, but that they may still grant permission to try it. Osborne notes, “Buy-in is overrated. Most of the time, we don’t need buy-in as much as we need permission.”<sup>69</sup> A leader may initiate change by simply asking permission without having to gain congregational buy-in.

**Communicate.** Leaders should remember that people do not want to be surprised with change, so over-communicating change will save headaches. Leading constructive change in church life will require constant communication with elders, staff, those who serve in the impacted ministry, those who serve in other ministries, and eventually, the entire congregation. Careful communication before, during, and after a change will reduce conflict and contribute to successful change. Osborne passes along sage counsel a rustic farmer once gave him: “Go slow, son, churches are a lot like horses. They don’t like to be startled or surprised. It causes deviant behavior.”<sup>70</sup>

Leaders must recognize that change always carries risk, but risk is right as the church serves Jesus’ mission. Theologian John Piper eloquently argues for taking risks in pursuit of the gospel mission: “If you live gladly to make others glad in God, your life will be hard, your risks will be high, and your joy will be full. This is not about how to avoid a wounded life, but how to avoid a wasted life. . . . Remember, you have one life. That is all. You were made for God. Don’t waste it.”<sup>71</sup> Effective ministry leaders understand this truth at a deep soul level.

## **Persevere**

A fourth skill that leaders should master is perseverance. Leading is hard, and often thankless work. Those who give up too soon will not enjoy the fruit of their

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<sup>69</sup> Osborne, *Sticky Teams*, 77, emphasis original.

<sup>70</sup> Osborne, *Sticky Teams*, 172.

<sup>71</sup> John Piper, *Don’t Waste Your Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 178.

leadership. So, leaders must persevere at the tasks of learning God’s Word, building teams, and leading constructive change.

Effective leaders should pursue their God-called mission with all their hearts, knowing that God blesses great dedication more than great giftedness. “For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (2 Chron 16:9 NIV). A ministry leader’s dogged determination to complete the mission will deeply impact those they lead (and those who oppose).

Church leadership expert Thom Rainer surveyed thousands of churches and identified those that had moved through a time of stagnation followed by a season of growth. Perseverance was the consistent characteristic of those *Breakout Church* leaders: “While we see many common characteristics of breakout church leaders, one trait that manifests itself repeatedly is persistence. These leaders see a clear goal, and though it may take years to reach the goal, they do not see giving up as an option.”<sup>72</sup>

Perseverance is particularly important for pastors who want to lead change in an existing church. This includes installing a process for developing leaders. Well-intentioned pastors who want to instigate change likely have a shorter tenure than members of the board. Those board members may have had to endure “new ideas” from previous pastors. Their opposition may not be so much hard-heartedness as self-protection. They have previously felt the relational pain that change brings to the church they love, and they will be less likely to pay that price for a pastor who is more than likely to leave in the face of pushback.

A pastor who is serious about creating a culture that develops leaders will need to pay the price of committing to stay at that ministry, not moving along to the next opportunity. The trust required to lead constructive change requires a significant investment of time. Osborne advises, “A pastor who wants to take on the privilege of strong

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<sup>72</sup> Thom Rainer, *Break Out Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 37.

leadership has to give up the freedom of loose commitment.”<sup>73</sup> Nothing builds trust among church members like an honest pastor committed to stay long-term. This is also true for ministry leaders within the local church. Commitment breeds commitment.

### Conclusion

This chapter may give the impression that ministry leaders can be effective simply by learning and applying character, purpose, and skill. Those elements are important tools in the leader’s arsenal, but leading others with excellence over time requires deep inner reserves of strength and joy. Where do ministry leaders find those reserves? Kouzes and Posner surprise us with the answer:

After studying leadership for over thirty years, through thousands of interviews and case analyses, we are constantly reminded about how many leaders use the word *love* freely when talking about their motivations to lead. . . . Of all the things that sustain a leader over time, love is the most lasting . . . the best-kept secret of successful leaders is love. . . . Leadership is not an affair of the head. Leadership is an affair of the heart.<sup>74</sup>

For believers, that love is not self-sourced. Rather, at their core, effective ministry leaders serve from the overflow of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ at work within them. This is the heart of ministry. Cultivating skill without love will not sustain. Love motivates like nothing else. The Scriptures put it clearly: “The greatest of these is love” (1 Cor 13:13).

The love of Christ provides ministry leaders with a constant reminder of their need for spiritual dependence. Believers have powerful resources already at their disposal: the Word and Spirit of God, spiritual gifts, the fellowship of other believers, and the promise that they need not fear, for God is with them. Believers have, in Christ, all the wisdom of God; indeed, they have everything necessary for life and godliness.<sup>75</sup> Accessing these spiritual resources requires dependence upon Christ. Therefore, ministry leaders must

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<sup>73</sup> Osborne, *Sticky Teams*, 92.

<sup>74</sup> Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 312-13.

<sup>75</sup> See Rom 8:9-11, 12:3-8; 1 Cor 1:23-31; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 13:5-8; 1 Pet 5:9; 2 Pet 1:3-8.

consistently and consciously seek to work in his strength and resources, not simply in determination or effort.<sup>76</sup> Those who lead others to serve Christ must walk with Christ.

This has been the approach of effective ministry leaders throughout church history. A few hundred years ago, Puritan pastor Richard Baxter urged ministry leaders to tend to their spiritual health: “Be careful *that your graces are kept in vigorous and lively exercise . . .* [your people] will likely feel when you have been much with God: that which is most on your hearts, is likely to be most in their ears.”<sup>77</sup>

Charles Spurgeon, who pastored in London in the mid-nineteenth century reminded ministry leaders,

It will be in vain for me to stock my library, or organise societies, or project schemes, if I neglect the culture of myself; for books, and agencies, and systems, are only remotely the instruments of my holy calling; my own spirit, soul, and body, are my nearest machinery for sacred service; my spiritual faculties, and my inner life, are my battle axe and weapons of war.<sup>78</sup>

Spurgeon uses the military language so popular in those days, but his point remains true. Ministry leaders must tend to their own souls in order to lead others well.

Spurgeon later quotes Scottish pastor Robert Murray M’Cheyene about the importance of ministry leaders guarding their hearts: “Remember you are God’s sword, His instrument—I trust, a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfection of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the

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<sup>76</sup> The constraints of this chapter do not allow for a full discussion of the active and passive roles that believers play in their sanctification. The Lord provides, through his initiative at salvation, all that is required for spiritual growth into Christian maturity. However, believers are repeatedly commanded to take action by obeying a command, overcoming sin, putting away harmful attitudes, exercising spiritual gifts, persevering in faith, or working out their salvation. In short, sanctification, like justification, is at God’s initiative with the resources he provides. However, believers have an active part to play in their sanctification. See for example Luke 9:23-27, 14:27-33; John 15:4, Acts 14:22; Rom 6:11-14, 12:1-2, 9-21; 1 Cor 6:20, 14:1, 16:13-14; Gal 5:16-26, 6:1-2; Eph 4:1, 17, 5:2, 8, 15; Phil 2:12-13, 3:1, 4:4-9; Col 2:6-7, 3:12-17; Heb 6:1, 10:19-25, 13:1-19; Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:13-21; 2 Pet 1:5-11; 1 John 4:7; Rev 3:11, 22:18-21.

<sup>77</sup> Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, ed. William Brown (New York: American Tract Society, 1892), 100. emphasis original.

<sup>78</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 7.



hand of God.”<sup>79</sup> Ministry leaders who want to be effective must pursue a vigorous personal spiritual life. Those who seek ministry leadership should be taught the value of dependence on the resources the Lord Jesus Christ provides for those who serve.

This chapter argued that healthy churches need effective leaders. A church benefits from seminary-educated pastors, and strong, godly elders. But a church also needs gifted men and women to serve as deacons, small group leaders, children and student ministry leaders, worship team members, finance, tech, facilities, and many other ministry roles. Therefore, a church should invest in a process to develop additional ministry leaders. These leaders should model high personal character, understand, and communicate purpose to those they serve, and learn the skills necessary to build volunteer teams. Further, ministry leaders should have a vigorous personal walk with Jesus Christ so that their love for him will sustain them as they serve. Churches that develop effective leaders will thrive; those who do not are likely to struggle.

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<sup>79</sup> Robert Murray M’Cheyne, quoted in Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, 8.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the preparation, implementation, and a brief evaluation of a class designed to train ministry leaders at Crossroads Community Church in Carol Stream, Illinois. The first section describes the preparation of the class curriculum, including some leadership background at Crossroads Community Church. The second section describes the implementation of the class in more detail, including week-by-week summaries of class lessons. The final section evaluates the class in general terms. Chapter 5 includes a thorough review of the class, including data from the pre/post class surveys.

#### **Preparing the Leadership Development Course**

Crossroads has taken risks leading to slow, steady growth from church plant attendance of 35 in 2001 to weekly worship of 800 across three campuses today. Growth and the addition of multiple campuses have increased the church's need to develop qualified ministry leaders. The need for additional ministry leaders drove the preparation of the curriculum, which reflects the leadership culture and history of Crossroads Community Church.

#### **The Need for Leaders**

Crossroads began in 2001 as a merger between First Baptist Church of Lombard and the church plant team that I led at the time. Constant focus on the Great Commission in those first days stimulated dramatic change, unified the new church, and brought steady growth. Over the past nineteen years, Crossroads has planted another church, Anchor Church Palos, adopted four struggling churches, closed one of those campuses, and

restarted three as campuses of Crossroads. One of those restarted campuses has since closed.

Leadership has made all the difference in our church's expansion. In fact, the church's growth and adoption of struggling churches motivated this project. Lack of effective ministry leaders contributed to our early church replant failure. Our current leadership recognized that growing Crossroads' current campuses and adding more will require a robust leadership development process. Crossroads must prioritize developing leaders for our continued health and growth.

Until now, Crossroads had responded to churches who reached out to us from a place of deep need. Rescuing those troubled churches put tremendous strain on our church leadership team and resources. So, our church has chosen to become proactive rather than reactive going forward. Crossroads' leadership team is asking, "How does adding a campus further Crossroads mission?" This is a better question than simply asking, "how does Crossroads help a struggling church?"

This new approach will require the addition of biblically qualified ministry leaders across all current campuses. Continued growth also demands that we prepare leaders for additional campuses. Crossroads has the people and resources to develop those ministry leaders but needs to implement a process for training those leaders. The curriculum was part of that process.

### **Developing Leaders Required a Process**

The curriculum developed for this project formed one step in identifying, developing, and equipping leaders to serve the congregation. Like many churches, Crossroads has identified leadership development as a top need.<sup>1</sup> As Crossroads grew, we had to move from organic leadership development (the staff knows everyone and can

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Logan and Tara Miller, *From Followers to Leaders* (St. Charles, IL: Church Smart Resources, 2007), 14.

identify potential leaders) to intentional leadership development. But we did not have a system for developing leaders, so gifted people fell through the cracks, potential leaders were not identified, and critical ministries were short-staffed.<sup>2</sup>

Crossroads organizes leadership into three groups: elders, staff, and deacons and other ministry leaders. All three groups needed additional ministry leaders. Crossroads is elder-governed and staff-led. Elders serve as the governing body of the church by setting direction, guarding doctrinal integrity, and working to grow disciples within the congregation. The staff executes day-to-day ministry under the direction of the senior pastor (who serves as an elder by virtue of his role). Deacons serve practical ministry needs, including caring for the buildings, setting annual budgets, and handling benevolence. Many deacons also lead volunteer ministry teams. As part of this leadership development project, Crossroads is encouraging all new deacon candidates to lead a ministry team.

Crossroads has preferred to develop elders, staff, and deacons from within. This preference also highlighted the need for the leadership curriculum taught as part of this project. For example, five of our current six elders are serving in an elder role for the first time. Eleven of the church's fourteen staff members have been hired from within or are in their first ministry experience.

Most of the church's ministry teams are led by deacons, all of whom have been developed from within the congregation. Some of the teams have more than 100 volunteers and budgets of hundreds of thousands of dollars. That is why our ministry leaders need to be well trained and supported. Since Crossroads values shaping ministry leaders, and since we have added more campuses recently, we needed leaders who can multiply the culture of the church in new settings.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the worship team includes 75 volunteers, while the children's ministry has more than 125. These ministries have been short-staffed with an ineffective leadership but thrived under those who develop others.

Crossroads already had a rigorous process for adding leaders. That leadership process included an application, multiple interviews, a trial elders/deacon/staff role, public interview, and congregational approval. The leadership process gives the congregation input and veto power over leadership additions. Congregational input matters because once approved, elders, staff, and deacons have wide authority to act on behalf of the church—including hiring, spending, adding to or disposing of assets, and building facilities. The vetting process usually takes six to nine months from interview to approval by the congregation. The leadership interview process covers this application information with participants who apply.

In the past, Crossroads has had success adding leaders from within the congregation, but usually these new leaders were known personally to existing leadership. Until this curriculum was developed, the church had not built a system for identifying, developing, and deploying new leaders. Researchers Robert Logan and Tara Miller find that this is common since most churches

don't yet have a clear path for developing leaders within our congregations. Most of us muddle through, patching together a plan as we go. Put on a training seminar. Offer a spiritual gifts test. Match a few potential leaders with mentors. Encourage would-be leaders to step out into ministry. All good things—potentially important steps along the way—but only a fraction as effective as they could be if they were woven together into an integrated whole.<sup>3</sup>

The curriculum developed for this project served as a foundational class in the new leadership development process at Crossroads.

### **Implementing the Leadership Development Course**

As a pastor, I have a history of developing those around me, so this project provided an opportunity to bring structure to a leadership process that has been ad hoc until now. The Leadership Development Course curriculum was based on my conviction that leadership is influencing others toward a worthy goal. The curriculum teaches that

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<sup>3</sup> Logan and Miller, *From Followers to Leaders*, 15.

leaders in a local church must model godly character, understand and communicate purpose to their teams, and learn to use a few basic leadership skills.

I taught the Leadership Development Course at the Village Bible campus of Crossroads Community Church during the spring of 2020.<sup>4</sup> The class included seven, ninety-minute sessions with thirty-six total participants.

The curriculum was divided into three parts: the leaders' character, the importance of purpose for leaders, and a few basic skills leaders need. Sessions 1 and 2 covered an introduction to leadership and the importance of character. Sessions 3 and 4 covered biblical content related to gospel purpose and Bible knowledge important for leadership in a local church context. Sessions 5 and 6 covered characteristics and skills needed to lead effectively.<sup>5</sup> A pre- and post-survey covering leadership knowledge and attitudes was administered to participants during class.<sup>6</sup>

Each session included lecture, class notes, and discussion. Sessions 2-6 began with a review of the weekly pre-class assignment that participants were assigned during the previous class. The class was divided into table groups for discussion and accountability. The three table leaders were class participants that I selected prior to class. Table leaders led discussions and contacted those in their group in the week before class. The third section of this chapter takes a detailed look at the class.

### **Goals for the Class**

The curriculum was designed to achieve four goals. First, the curriculum taught Crossroads Community Church's purpose to glorify God by making, baptizing, and teaching disciples. Making disciples begins by sharing the gospel so that an unbeliever

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<sup>4</sup> The curriculum is included as appendix 3.

<sup>5</sup> A review session was added between curriculum weeks 2 and 3 because of a delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Matthew Haste approved the resumption of class sessions online. Therefore, the class covered six sessions of curriculum in seven class meetings.

<sup>6</sup> Results are discussed in chap. 5 of this project.

turns from sin and believes in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:3-5). Biblically qualified and practically equipped leaders should move forward Crossroads' pursuit of the Great Commission.

Second, the curriculum included an examination of biblical leadership. The focus was on understanding the spiritual and character qualities God requires for overseers, elders, and deacons. However, the application was broadened to include those who lead other areas of ministry in the church. This broader application was appropriate because elders and deacons are to model the faith for the congregation they serve (1 Tim 4:11-13).

Third, the curriculum taught basic hermeneutics. Ministry leaders must learn how to observe, interpret, and apply God's Word to their own lives and those they lead. Teaching ministry leaders how to accurately interpret the Scriptures empowers them to protect the church and solve problems.

Fourth, the study taught practical application of leadership skills to a ministry setting within the local church. Those who participated learned how to serve in a manner appropriate to their giftedness and in a way which blesses others within the church and furthers the church's mission to the world (1 Pet 4:7-11).

The outcome of participation in this study should have been an increase of knowledge about the requirements and best practices for ministry leadership among elders, deacons, and ministry leaders at Crossroads Community Church (Phil 2:12-18; 1 Pet 3:13-16).<sup>7</sup> In addition, the material provided valuable resources for a participant's family and business life, although this is not the primary application.

### **Curriculum Development and Revision**

I developed this curriculum around certain fundamental convictions and experiences that I bring to pastoral ministry: godly leaders greatly enhance a local church's effectiveness, the gospel is top priority for a local church, the Scriptures are the final

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<sup>7</sup> Detailed data is examined in chap. 5. Data results are available in appendix 4.

authority for the local church, and committed volunteers can learn leadership basics that will strengthen their ministry in the local church.

I crafted the first section of this curriculum out of my conviction (and experience) that leading a local church toward obeying the Great Commission is fundamental to the pastor/elder role. Therefore, sessions 1 and 2 were designed to define leadership, illustrate Jesus' ministry leadership from Matthew 20:20-28, teach the power of purpose, and show the need for leaders to develop others within the congregation to achieve that purpose.

I crafted the second section of this curriculum out of my twin convictions that the gospel is top priority and the Word of God is the final authority for the local church. Therefore, sessions 3 and 4 were designed to teach the basics of the gospel, the authority of the Scriptures, and a simple process for understanding what a person reads in the Scriptures.

I crafted the third section of this curriculum out of my conviction that committed volunteers can learn leadership basics that strengthen their ministry in the local church. Therefore, sessions 5 and 6 were designed to teach attitudes and behaviors that effective ministry leaders develop and exhibit.

My experience over many years of planting and turning around churches taught me the value of godly, humble, skilled leadership for a local church. Likewise, leading growing churches illustrated the power of the gospel to transform unbelievers, believers, church boards, and even the community around a church. Further, preaching for thirty years taught me the power of God's Word to shape individuals and the entire congregation.

Finally, I have developed many volunteers over the years who now serve in key ministry roles—both voluntary and as a vocation. Men and women can learn helpful skills that will grow their ministry effectiveness. These convictions and experiences deeply impacted the content of the curriculum I developed and taught for this project.



The curriculum was written, sent to an expert panel, and revised during January, February, and early March of 2020. The panel evaluated the curriculum using the rubric suggested by SBTS office of Professional Doctoral Studies.<sup>8</sup> The curriculum and rubric were sent to four experts for review and graded at 96 percent.<sup>9</sup> This score met the project goal that the curriculum be graded at 90 percent or higher by an expert panel upon review.<sup>10</sup>

The expert panel included a college physics professor, an Old Testament seminary professor, a local pastor, and a businessman who serves as an elder. Two panelists are current members of Crossroads. In addition to completing the rubric, one panelist provided a four-page, single spaced critique with specific suggestions for improvement. Another panelist sent back a marked-up copy of the curriculum with specific suggestions for clarifying the material. Both documents were helpful in strengthening the curriculum. I included the expert panel suggestions in the curriculum for this project.

Prior to the first class, I prepared a pre- and post-class survey.<sup>11</sup> This survey was administered to participants early in class and again at the close of the final class. The survey was designed to gather information on participants' knowledge and attitude toward serving/leading ministry at Crossroads Community Church and included the appropriate consent to participate.

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<sup>8</sup> The rubric is available in appendix 2.

<sup>9</sup> The expert panel graded the curriculum at 123/128 possible points on the SBTS rubric form.

<sup>10</sup> The expert panel included Darren Craig (PhD, University of Wisconsin), chair of the Physics Department at Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL; Ryan Hall (MA, Moody Bible Institute), founder and senior pastor of Anchor Church, Palos Heights, IL; James Hoffmeier (PhD, University of Toronto), professor of Archaeology and Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical School of Divinity (retired), Deerfield, IL, elder emeritus at Crossroads; and Ben Pierson (MBA, University of Notre Dame), Chief Operating Officer of Diesel Radiator Corporation, Elk Grove Village, IL, elder at Crossroads.

<sup>11</sup> The pre/post-class survey available in appendix 1.

The survey was designed to be modified for use at any local church or ministry. The survey had four sections with questions about the participants' (1) personal background; (2) ministry background; (3) perception of the church's support for ministry leaders; and (4) perception of personal and ministry leadership skills. The pre-test and post-test survey provided helpful information for crafting the curriculum toward specific needs of class members.

### **Recruiting Participants**

I recruited participants for this class beginning January 20, 2020 through bulletin announcements across all three campuses of Crossroads. The general announcements were buttressed by pulpit announcements, targeted emails, and personal invitations. Ultimately, a total of 36 participants attended, representing all three campuses. The largest campus, Gary Avenue, sent 15 participants (including two pastors who have responsibilities across campuses); the DeKalb campus sent 2 participants; and Village Bible sent 15 participants. One former member who moved to Alabama in 2019 participated online. Three participants did not identify which campus they attend.

Priority was given to inviting members from the newest campus, Village Bible (VBC), which joined the church family officially in the late fall of 2019. Their participation was important so that ministry leaders from that campus could quickly learn Crossroads' leadership culture. VBC participants included 4 who had formerly served as elders (their elders did not continue in that role after the merger with Crossroads, although one is on the elder onramp), the chairman of the board at the time of the merger, two former chairmen, three trustees, two deaconesses, the entire missions committee, tech team, the treasurer, and the new campus pastor.

Among those from other campuses were several new believers, small group leaders, deacons, elders, and the new campus pastor for the DeKalb campus. Overall, leadership representation was good from all campuses. In addition, gathering in class together built community among those who attend different campuses.

## **Class Experience**

The curriculum was scheduled for six weeks, roughly divided into thirds that focused, consecutively, on the character required of a ministry leader, understanding the Bible, and some characteristics and skills required to build and strengthen ministry teams. The curriculum covered the following material week-by-week.<sup>12</sup>

**Week 1.** Class began with the pre-test survey and introduction to leadership. This session defined leadership as “influencing others to achieve a worthy goal.” The material identified four qualities of effective leaders: integrity, vision, humility, and generosity. Since this was the first class, I spent the first thirty minutes introducing myself and the table leaders (these were class members whom I had previously selected to lead table discussion). The class then broke into table groups to introduce themselves (name tags had been placed on each table to intentionally assign participants into groups).

Following table discussion, a person from each table volunteered to give a report to the entire class about their group. This table talk helped me evaluate who demonstrated hunger for leadership and a willingness to go first. The class ended with a table assignment to read and report back on Jesus’ conversation with his disciples recorded in Matthew 20:20-28.

**Week 2.** This session focused on the power of purpose and people for ministry leaders. Those who had not completed the class survey did so at the start of this session. Then class began by reviewing the pre-class assignment included in the curriculum, which was to be completed prior to the class meeting.<sup>13</sup> The pre-class assignment covered Matthew’s record of the Great Commission. The material emphasized the power of purpose to motivate volunteers.

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<sup>12</sup> The curriculum is available in appendix 3.

<sup>13</sup> The pre-class assignment was included in each week of the curriculum starting with week 2.

Since I teach that the Great Commission is the purpose for the church, the class spent extra time discussing what purpose means to ministry leadership. Participants were invited to tell stories around their table about how the Great Commission impacted their families, work, and church lives. Discussion of the Great Commission as the purpose of church also raised questions about how the gospel touches every other area of life for believers.

The second part of class focused on those who lead ministry in a local church setting—pastors/elders and deacons. During this class, we defined the role of pastor/elder as those who model godliness, care for, and lead the congregation. Deacons were presented as humble servants who help with the practical ministry needs of the church. Talking through the qualifications individually raised questions about why churches sometimes overlook these qualifications. Participants closed the class around their tables discussing the dangers that arise when a church loses sight of purpose.

**Week 3.** This session focused on the heart of the gospel message organized around three theological statements: God is good, humankind is fallen, and Jesus Christ saves. Participants had homework related to these concepts in the pre-class assignment. The gospel presentation began with an understanding of God’s character (he is good, holy, and loving), then moved to human dignity and depravity.

Teaching these Bible truths about God and mankind raised the question of how humans are made right with God. This led into a discussion of Jesus’ substitutionary death and the need for humans to repent and believe in response to the gospel. Class finished with an assignment reminding students that the church is called to share the good news of Jesus Christ to make, baptize, and teach disciples (a review of session 2).

**Week 4.** This session focused on the skills necessary to read and understand the great treasury that is the Bible. The material presented three unique aspects of the Bible (it is inspired, has authority, and is illuminated by the Holy Spirit) and then moved

onto basic hermeneutics. Class notes outlined a three-step hermeneutic process:

(1) observation (notice what the text says); (2) interpretation (determine what the text means); and (3) application (ask what the text requires of the reader). Participants closed class by practicing on two Bible texts in their table groups. However, time ran short on this assignment.

**Week 5.** This session explored four ingredients of effective leaders: character, calling, resilience, and humility. The class reviewed the importance of character for ministry leaders before moving on to how to discern calling, develop resilience, and demonstrate humility.

The calling piece generated plenty of discussion. The curriculum encouraged participants to clarify their calling by answering questions like, “What do you love doing?” “What are your natural gifts?” “What breaks your heart?” “Where have you had success?” “What are your spiritual gifts?” “What does a mentor/trusted friend say you are good at doing?”

The section in the notes on humility taught that a ministry leader should recognize that they serve a greater cause—the gospel, not their own agenda. This understanding of humility can help to reduce frustration and increase the strength a leader needs to endure the inevitable criticism they will face, especially as they lead change. The class closed with discussion about how participants can apply these four leadership ingredients to the ministry they serve.

**Week 6.** This session listed four best practices of effective ministry leaders: purpose, teambuilding, constructive change, and perseverance. The first part of class reiterated the power of understanding and communicating purpose to the team that a ministry leader serves. The class was especially interested in teambuilding, specifically how to recruit volunteers without using guilt, which had been an issue at VBC in the past. Many of the same people served in an endless rotation of roles, often without wanting to

serve that way. Since many of the participants had recently joined our church as part of the VBC adoption (a dramatic change after sixty years of independent Bible church existence), I spent considerable time teaching how to lead constructive change.

Because of the extra time I spent on the first three practices, I barely touched on perseverance. However, since this was the most compact of all the sessions, I was able to address issues specific to the participants in this class. I allowed extra time for discussion in this class. The post-test survey was administered the final fifteen minutes of this session.

### **Evaluating the Leadership Development Course**

COVID-19 impacted this project when the governor of Illinois shut down the state on March 12. Initially, I postponed class until early May, but the crisis lasted longer than anyone expected. Therefore, I requested of my advisor, Matthew D. Haste, that I be able to teach the remaining sessions via Zoom (an online video conferencing provider). He granted that request on April 1. Class resumed via teleconference on Tuesday, April 21, and continued each week through May 19.

Sessions 3-6 were hosted online through Zoom. I used the first week of Zoom, April 21, to review the first two sessions. I also laid out expectations and behaviors (mute yourself upon entry, but do not be shy to speak up during discussion). Consequently, the class covered the six-week curriculum in seven sessions.

The number of participants remained strong, averaging 24 participants per online session, with a total of 27 participants online overall. Students connected online at the beginning of class. Each week, a few participants signed on late but usually joined unobtrusively. I greeted participants individually and spent the first ten minutes in small talk. We opened the online sessions with prayer. Then, I reviewed the pre-class assignment for the week and answered questions from that material.

I taught while at the standing desk in my office. Teaching well online required extra steps to ensure a quality online broadcast. I purchased a high definition web camera

with a quality external microphone and set up special lighting to avoid shadows and highlight one side of my face over the other, thus creating a sense of depth.

I had a harder time judging engagement from participants in the online setting than in a classroom. Students muted themselves upon entry as requested. But some also blanked their screens—I trust they were there for the entire class, but I cannot confirm that. Furthermore, I had to guard against talking over other participants on Zoom. For example, when I asked a question several people would unmute themselves and talk at once. Then, all the participants would stop. Eventually, I learned to call on people one at a time or sort out respondents by name to allow for consecutive answers rather than face the confusion of simultaneous answers from multiple participants.

The online experience created awkward silences from participants at times. I had to consciously fight the urge to speak up too quickly and fill a pause following a question. By the third week online, we mostly figured out how to interact online, but the in-person teaching experience was far better for class participation in my opinion.

Table leaders reached out to their groups each week prior to class but table group discussion was impossible during class online. Many participants who had spoken up in the smaller table group, stayed silent when I asked for online discussion. This dampened discussion.

The pre-class survey was handled during the first two weeks of in-person class meetings. The post-class survey was more troublesome since we did not meet in person. The survey was sent to each participant by email prior to the final class session along with instructions for completing and returning the survey. It took two weeks following the final class to collect the surveys via email. Four participants printed the survey and dropped it off at the church office. I converted the survey into an online version for future classes.

In summary, the Leadership Development Course faced significant challenges from COVID-19. However, participation was high for the class overall—36 total participants attended including members from all three Crossroads campuses. Discussion

was stronger during the two in-person classes (for those sessions I had trouble gathering table groups back together to continue with lecture). Many stayed long after class to ask questions or discuss material.

The number of participants remained strong after moving the class online, but the total number of online participants dropped from 36 to 27. The online class did allow a former Crossroads member who now lives in Alabama to attend. He is leading change at a church there and loved the class. Overall, the class seemed to achieve the stated purpose of teaching participants the value of character, purpose, and skill for ministry leaders in the local church. Chapter 5 summarizes the class data in more detail.

### **Conclusion**

Many potential ministry leaders attended the class, including a new believer who serves the local school board; children's, student, and small group ministry leaders; and both new campus pastors. The material applied perfectly to the setting, especially to those from the new VBC campus. I was pleased that former board chairmen, elders, deacons, and church officers from VBC attended. These ministry leaders wrestled through how to apply Crossroads' culture at their new campus.

The VBC ministry leaders had an opportunity to put into practice the leadership principles they learned during the class. The VBC campus flooded, but class participants helped clean up the flooded equipment with joy and dedication. The Lord gave the class a real-life application of what they learned. Those who sat in our virtual classroom were given the opportunity to clean filthy floodwater in the real world. Our class learned how ministry leadership works. Teaching that lesson was the purpose for this curriculum, as I taught in the first session: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Matt 20:26).



## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT EVALUATION AND REFLECTIONS

#### **Introduction**

This project grew out of the realization that Crossroads, the church I pastor in the western suburbs of Chicago, must put in place a process for developing and deploying effective ministry leaders, or risk missing its full ministry potential. The elders, staff, deacons, and ministry team share my desire to develop leaders because we share a burden for reaching suburban Chicagoland with the gospel by growing the congregation, adding additional campuses, and planting churches. Those gospel goals require more God-called, holy, skilled men and women who are capable of leading ministry teams in the local church. Therefore, I developed and wrote the curriculum, sent it to an expert panel for evaluation, and made improvements from their suggestions. This curriculum will become one part of a leadership development process.

The curriculum defined leadership as influencing others toward a worthy goal. Further, the curriculum emphasized the importance of character, purpose, and teambuilding skills for those who lead ministry teams. A total of 36 individuals attended the class, including several who are on the leadership track at Crossroads. The first two sessions met in person and had the best interaction. Feedback from table leaders and class members was good. After the second session, class was suspended for several weeks because of COVID-19.

Class resumed online with a newly added third session that reviewed the first two lessons. While the final four sessions were well attended online, the class experienced a 25 percent falloff in total attendance (from 36 to 27). Further, the online experience made it harder to judge the level of class participation because of the limitations

of teleconferencing. Participants who completed the course demonstrated a high commitment to attending and a hunger for the material during a raging pandemic.

### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to increase the knowledge of biblically qualified ministry leaders by creating, teaching, and evaluating a curriculum to be taught at Crossroads Community Church in Carol Stream, Illinois. This purpose was met during project implementation. The curriculum originally included six sessions to be taught over ninety minutes each. An additional session was added following a multi-week layoff caused by COVID-19.

Individual class sessions included prayer, lecture, table discussion (directed by pre-assigned table leaders), and case studies. The first two weeks began with an introduction and pre-test survey. The following weeks included a review of the weekly pre-class assignment. Week 7 (session 6) concluded with a post-test survey designed to evaluate the participants' knowledge and attitudes toward local church leadership.

Attendees included current elders, two campus pastors, small group leaders, a children's ministry director, student ministry pastor, church treasurer, a new believer, and several considering ministry roles at Crossroads. Table leaders included two campus pastors, a former board chair, and a small group leader. This mix of attendees provided a wide exposure to the leadership curriculum by current and potential leaders from multiple ministries across three campuses. This leads me to conclude that the project achieved its purpose to teach a leadership curriculum.

### **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

This project was designed to achieve three goals. The first goal was to develop a six-session curriculum covering the need for and qualifications of biblical ministry leadership. This goal was met when an expert panel reviewed and suggested improvements for the curriculum. The panel graded the curriculum at 123/128 possible points (96

percent).<sup>1</sup> The panel included three college professors and one local pastor. All experts gave valuable feedback. Two panelists wrote detailed critiques that were helpful. The feedback improved the material and was included in the revised curriculum taught to the participants and used for future classes.

The second goal was to increase the knowledge base of participants for ministry leadership by teaching the training curriculum in a six-session series of classes at Crossroads Community Church. Attendees were considered to have successfully participated when they attended four of the six class sessions. Further, this class was successful when at least twelve current or potential ministry leaders complete the class (elders, deacons, or other ministry leaders). This goal was met because 36 participants attended the class and 24 (67 percent) attended at least four sessions.

The goal of increasing the knowledge base of participants was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive meaningful change in the mean scores from the pre- and post-class survey scores<sup>2</sup>. Participants were given a survey at the beginning and close of the series of training classes to evaluate whether teaching the curriculum increased the knowledge base of participants. General participant data is evaluated in the following section. An evaluation of test data is included in this chapter under the “Description of Survey” heading.<sup>3</sup>

The third goal was to increase participation in ministry leadership at Crossroads by adding ten ministry leaders who have completed the ministry leadership course. This goal was accomplished by adding thirteen ministry leaders who completed the leadership course. However, the ministry context requires a lengthy process to

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 2 for rubric.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1 for survey.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 4 for *t*-test results data.

become a deacon or elder. So, some have begun the leadership onramp, but not yet completed the process for serving in those ministry roles.

### **Project Participants**

Thirty-six participants attended the class—24 participants (67 percent of the total) attended four of six sessions; 27 participants (75 percent of the total) completed the pre-class survey; 21 participants (78 percent of those who took the pre-class survey) also completed the post-class survey. 12 students attended all sessions.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, 9 participants (25 percent of the total number of participants) stopped attending when class moved online after the second session. Of the participants, 85 percent currently serve in a ministry at some level,<sup>5</sup> 81 percent have a quiet time at least twice a week, 74 percent of participants hold college degrees, and 30 percent have completed a graduate degree.

As part of the class survey, participants were asked to rank in order four of the most helpful spiritual activities in which they take part. Those who completed the survey ranked the Sunday message as most helpful to their spiritual growth, followed by serving in a ministry, attending a small group, and attending Sunday morning worship. This survey response seems to indicate that participants who completed this survey highly value teaching and serving. Their responses also reflect the high value Crossroads places on biblical content as covered in sessions 3 and 4 of the curriculum, making these participants good candidates for ministry leadership. See table 1 for specific results.

Table 1. Activity most helpful to growth

Sunday morning worship	1 response
Sunday morning message	8 responses
Attending small group	4 responses
Serving in a ministry	6 responses

<sup>4</sup> This course had seven sessions because of the coronavirus. The third session began the online class experience by reviewing the first two sessions and introducing the class to teleconferencing.

<sup>5</sup> Participants from VBC are new to ministry at Crossroads by virtue of an adoption of VBC by Crossroads in late 2019.

## **Project Survey Results**

The number of respondents combined with the thoroughness of the survey instrument generated plenty of data. The ministry survey included 40 questions, the first 6 of which gathered information about the participant. The remaining 34 questions were in the form of a modified Likert scale and divided into four sections: (1) Ministry Background, (2) Church Support, (3) Personal Leadership, (4) Ministry Leadership. These 34 Likert scale questions were intended to gather information about the participants knowledge and attitude toward leading ministry in a local church setting. The following paragraphs include general observations gathered from participant responses to the 34 questions rated by the Likert scale.

## **T-Test Results**

A *t*-test for dependent samples was utilized to determine if there was a meaningful change in the mean scores as measured by the class surveys.<sup>6</sup> The survey showed a meaningfully positive statistical change in the mean scores overall based on a review of the data. The pre-class survey showed an average score of 3.90/5.00 for participants. The post-class survey showed an average score of 4.07/5.00. This represents an increase of 4.24 percent among participants' understanding of and attitude toward ministry leadership. Eight survey statements (9, 18, 20, 23, 24, 32, 35, 36) showed the most meaningful positive change.<sup>7</sup> Each of the eight statements showed positive change from the pre-test to the post-test. The next section addresses specifics of the test data.

The largest movement in participant responses from pre-test to post-test came (in descending order) on statements 18 (“I know how to measure success in ministry”), 36 (“A ministry leader must know the Bible well to lead effectively”), and 23 (“Crossroads provides adequate communication to/about this ministry to our congregation”). The

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix 4 for *t*-test results.

<sup>7</sup> I received assistance interpreting survey data from two Crossroads' members who have experience in statistics and probabilities.

responses from participants to these statements demonstrate that the curriculum had the most statistically significant positive change in participants' understanding of how to evaluate ministry success, the value participants placed on Bible knowledge for leaders, and the need for Crossroads' ministry leaders to communicate ministry information to the congregation.

Statement 18 moved from a pre-test average of 3.47/5.00 to a post-test average of 4.05/5.00. Statement 36 moved from a pre-test average of 3.84 to a post-test average of 4.37. Statement 23 moved from a pre-test average of 3.00 to a post-test average of 3.47. Overall, the results showed positive movement from the pre-test to the post-test in 29 statements. Four statements showed negative movement. One statement showed no movement.

### **Observations on Selected Survey Results**

The Likert scale portion of the survey was divided into four sections: Ministry Background, Church Support, Personal Leadership, and Ministry Leadership.

The Ministry Background section of the Likert scale showed highest agreement (4.7/5.0) with statement 8: "I believe a person's character will directly impact their ministry effectiveness." This provides a strong starting point for the participants since the curriculum emphasizes the importance of character for ministry leaders. The lowest agreement (3.4/5.0) came on statement 15: "I am confident I can recruit new volunteers for this ministry." This result demonstrates a need for help with team building. The curriculum addresses an area in which ministry leaders rated themselves weak.

The Church Support section revealed the highest agreement (4.3/5.0) with statement 24: "I believe that this ministry helps Crossroads achieve its purpose." This finding reflects the high value Crossroads places on the Great Commission as the church's purpose. The curriculum repeatedly emphasizes the value of ministry leaders knowing and communicating purpose to volunteers. The lowest agreement (3.2/5.0) came on statement 20: "Crossroads provides adequate training for this ministry." Those responses

reinforce that Crossroads must do more to develop and train leaders on an ongoing basis. Those responses also point out the need for a class designed to train ministry leaders.

The Personal Leadership section showed the highest agreement (4.2/5.0) with statement 29: “I am confident reading the Bible in public.” This result is not surprising since participants placed a high value on Bible teaching. Further, public reading of Scripture can be intimidating, but requires little preparation and is common in our church worship services.

The Personal Leadership section showed the lowest agreement (3.3/5.0) on statement 32: “I am confident I can teach a class in church.” Reading the Bible and teaching a class both require some form of public speaking, but teaching a class demands preparation of material and confidence that the teacher has something of value to add to class members.

This finding seems to point out the need for sessions 3-4 of the curriculum, which deals with understanding the gospel and God’s Word. Once again, this finding points out that Crossroads must do more to equip ministry leaders who can teach in a small group or Bible class setting.

The Ministry Leadership section showed the highest agreement (4.6/5.0) with statement 37: “A ministry leader should model godly character to lead effectively.” Agreement with this statement seems to reveal that participants began the study with a strong belief that character matters for ministry leaders. The curriculum clarified and reinforced that belief by exposing the students to biblical texts that make this same point.

The Ministry Leadership section showed the weakest agreement (2.7/5.0) on statement 35: “A ministry leader should have proven experience in the business or educational world.” Many participants recognized at the beginning of class that business success does not automatically translate into ministry effectiveness. In fact, the curriculum makes the point that these leadership principles will be helpful in church, home, school, and business. Participants are likely to agree with this claim. However, the

low agreement result may point to a resistance toward successful businesspeople serving as ministry leaders. Therefore, the sessions covering leadership skills (5-6) should do more to explain the value of leadership skills that work in a church or business setting.

The pre-class survey demonstrated that participants already rated character as important for ministry leaders. The curriculum reinforced this belief in multiple sessions. Further, the pre-class survey showed that participants felt relatively unprepared to recruit additional volunteers or to teach a class in the church. Therefore, the curriculum should pay special attention to those areas in future classes.

Participants rated Crossroads low in providing training for them and their ministry volunteers. These findings identify an area for improvement in volunteer care. Overall, participants provided helpful information about their knowledge and attitudes toward ministry leadership. The survey results also provided guidance for designing future classes.

## **Strengths of the Project**

### **Biblical Content**

I agree with the expert panel, all four of whom pointed to the biblical content as a great strength of the curriculum. Week after week participants interacted with God's Word before and during class. Participants learned fundamental truth about the power of the gospel to change lives, the purpose of the church, and the value of God's Word in a believer's life. Even the practical sessions were infused with biblical examples of leadership (Moses, Jesus, Paul). Furthermore, the study of qualifications for pastor/elder and deacon helped to fix in the students' minds the authority of God's Word in the church.

Healthy Christians should recognize and respect the spiritual authority of pastors, elders, and ministry leaders. However, mature Christians also acknowledge that those spiritual leaders serve a higher authority—the Lord Jesus and his gospel. Knowing



God's Word can protect faithful believers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous leaders.<sup>8</sup> Healthy leaders tend to grow healthy churches.

A second strength of the project curriculum was the section on reading and understanding the Scriptures. This session on hermeneutics (4) was too long for this class (see weaknesses section), but vital for ministry leaders to understand. One expert panelist called sessions 3 and 4 the heart of the material and the strongest, in his opinion. The portion of that session that deals with General/Special Revelation is somewhat technical for the casual church attendee. The three-step approach to understanding the Scriptures (observation, interpretation, and application) should build the participant's confidence that God has, in fact, spoken. Therefore, they have truth on which to build their lives.

### **Pre-Class Assignments**

The pre-class assignments were a third strength of the project. These short assignments were intended to be completed prior to class and were part of the curriculum from weeks 2 through 6. The assignments encouraged students to read Scripture and complete work related to the upcoming session. Ambitious students were able to study the concepts for each session in advance and even pursue additional study or resources that interested them. Participants who came to class prepared were familiar with the new material and added value to class discussion.

### **Table Groups**

The table groups added a fourth strength to the class experience. I had selected table leaders from among participants prior to the first class based on those that I believed would do well in the role. Participants were then assigned to one of three table groups during the first class. Table leaders were expected to contact their group each week prior

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<sup>8</sup> Paul warned the Ephesian elders that "from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be alert" (Acts 20:30-31). Participants studied this passage during the class.

to class. Table leaders answered questions about the pre-class assignment from participants. Table leaders also led discussions around the table during class. Table discussion often went beyond the time allotted. Future versions of the curriculum should add training for table leaders to make table groups a larger part of future classes. Further, class time for table discussion should be increased.

### **Practical Skills**

A fifth strength of the project was the emphasis on teaching practical ministry skills such as recruiting, delegating, leading change, and persevering. The biblical content focused on real-life circumstances within the church and addressed topics common to leading volunteer teams.

Participants specifically mentioned the value of clarifying calling (session 5). One moment from class stood out to me. A participant who had recently been removed from the worship team as his campus grew spoke up about how much that hurt him. He said he did not know where he fit in anymore at the church he loved and where he had served for many years (he was part of the Village Bible Church adoption in late 2019). We discussed this situation in class that night. I also had a phone conversation with him later that same week. He told me that he did not feel called to the worship team, but he felt needed on that team. I encouraged him to consider the questions about clarifying calling that we covered in class. After doing that, he has since joined the hospitality and security teams. He now carries a different instrument at church—but he is still serving.

A final strength was the broad application of practical ministry leadership skills beyond church life. Several participants mentioned that the class helped them in their work life. The emphasis on character seemed to bring real value to participants who often lead their company in a culture that is increasingly hostile to believers.

One participant, who leads a manufacturing plant, said that session 6 (teambuilding) helped him deal with problems his team faced on a large project. Every teacher likes to know that the material benefits those who learn. This curriculum is

specific to ministry leadership in a local church context but has wider application for home, business, and education. Overall, the curriculum provided biblical and practical material for training ministry leaders.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

Authors always seem to find it easier to list weaknesses than strengths, and that was true for me on this project. The following paragraphs examine the weaknesses I observed during class.

#### **Too Much Material**

The first weakness was that there was too much material to cover nearly every week. Session 1 should spend more time defining leadership rather than moving on so quickly to the four qualities of leadership that follow. Also, more time should be given to the session 1 closing exercise—Jesus’ example of leadership as recorded in Matthew 20:20-28.

Session 2 has two topics mashed up into one: purpose and people. Each topic warrants a separate session. This is especially true given the importance of purpose for leadership in general, and ministry leadership in particular. During this same session, the discussion of pastor/elder/deacon qualifications could fill an entire class. Participants had questions, many driven by previous painful experiences with unhealthy church leadership.

Session 4 (hermeneutics) was especially egregious in the amount of material for the class time allotted. The material attempted to teach a semester’s worth of bibliology and hermeneutics in ninety minutes, including an in-class assignment. This session alone would make a good four-week study. Week after week we ran out of class time for discussion and table assignments. The class covered too much material too quickly.

#### **Uneven Flow**

The uneven flow of the material from session to session was a second weakness of the project. The logical connections between one session and the next were not always

clear. This is particularly true when moving from one major emphasis to the next. For example, sessions 1 and 2 focused on the definition, character, and value of purpose for ministry leaders, while sessions 3 and 4 focus on the gospel and hermeneutics. I made the connections between those concepts during class lecture, but those connections were not apparent in the curriculum.

Future versions of the curriculum need to explain the overall flow of the material. This could be accomplished by revising the introduction to the entire curriculum. In future versions of the curriculum, each session should close with a session summary and a preview of the following session. This simple addition would smooth the sometimes-jolting flow of material from session to session.

### **Lack of Illustrations**

One expert panelist, a university professor and department chair, pointed out a third weakness: the dearth of visuals, graphics, illustrations, and charts in the material. Many people are visual learners and would benefit from more visuals. Furthermore, quality visual graphics can make complex concepts more understandable. The lack of visuals was a weakness of this version of the curriculum.

### **More Case Studies**

The table leaders pointed out a fourth weakness. The material needs more stories. When I debriefed with table leaders after each session they argued for more illustrations during the lecture. I covered leadership principles clearly and at length, but I did not tell enough stories to tie the principle to real-life illustrations with which students could identify. Case studies drew particularly good interaction from table groups. In future versions of the curriculum, case studies should be set up in some pre-class assignments. Then, participants can work through the case studies during table talk time.

### **Table Leader Follow Up**

The lack of table leader follow-up with students outside of class was a fifth weakness. Table leaders were faithful to email invitations to their groups prior to class. Table leaders also interacted well during table talk and assignments during class. However, table leaders should have been more proactive in contacting those in their groups to encourage them to complete the pre-class assignment. Table leaders were also lax about contacting those who missed a week of class. In defense of the table leaders though, we lost several weeks to the coronavirus outbreak in mid-March. I should have followed-up with table leaders more aggressively and held them more accountable.

### **The Online Experience**

The following two weaknesses are related to the circumstances specific to this class. The online context (in our case, Zoom teleconferencing) limited classroom participation by students. It was difficult for me to gauge student engagement, which deeply bothered me.

I was unable to set up “Zoom Rooms” for breakout discussions, so table discussion not a significant part of sessions 3-6. Further, the online format seemed to encourage the most outgoing people to speak up. This “speak out now” dynamic tended to cow the quieter participants. I asked my wife, Vicki, who is more introverted than I, to attend an online session as an observer. She said that the online platform, which often included more than 25 participants, discouraged contributions by those who take time to warm up. Some of that criticism reflects my rush to fill the times of silence. In all, online was not the best platform for this kind of class that benefits from class interaction and discussion. I much prefer a live classroom setting for future sessions.

A live classroom allows me to better gauge student engagement and interest. A live classroom also allows for breaking into smaller table groups for discussion and drives greater participation. Further, in a classroom I can roam table to table and interact with participants as they wrestle through questions. Finally, I chose table leaders with an eye

for their potential to be future small group leaders or classroom teachers. This kind of observation is impossible online.

### **Average Age**

The average age of participants concerned me. Many class members were over 50.<sup>9</sup> This age is above the average age of our staff, elders, and church (staff average age is 41, elder average age is 46).

One major reason for the age of participants was the adoption of Village Bible Church as a campus in late 2019. Village Bible had a sixty-year history of gospel faithfulness. However, their church had aged, finding itself with no young children, only two young families, and no plan to reach the community surrounding the church. VBC became our third campus shortly before this course began (January 2020). A large part of their motivation for becoming part of our church family was to reach the younger generation.

I urged many who had faithfully led ministry at VBC to attend this class, and 17 did. Their participation raised the average age. But the participants from other campuses also skewed older (many in their 50s). These faithful believers are a great resource for our church, but they also point to a threat for the future of our ministry. Crossroads must identify, develop, and deploy younger ministry leaders.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

Teaching this curriculum brought educational value to me as a pastor. Overall, the experience was positive and life-giving for me and many of the participants. Still, there are several ways to improve the experience for future classes. I discuss those suggested improvements in the following paragraphs.

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<sup>9</sup> Only five participants were under the age of 50.

### **More Old Testament**

I will teach this curriculum differently in the future by inviting students to interact more with the biblical text. For example, session 3, that covers the gospel, does not reference the Old Testament roots of the gospel. Students should be exposed to more Old Testament references to the gospel. The material does not cover the New Covenant in Ezekiel and Jeremiah. Session 4 covers too much hermeneutical ground and should be revised into two sessions. This would allow for some time dealing with Old Testament material.

### **More Local Church**

The sessions should more tightly focus on the local church setting. For example, how does a children's ministry leader volunteer build a team? I asked a participant who leads a major component of the children's ministry to give an example of how she had connected her volunteers' efforts with the purpose of the ministry. She blanked. That was a great time to discuss how to do that in a local church setting full of volunteers. Every session, especially the practical skills covered in sessions 5 and 6, should connect with the week-to-week efforts and needs of ministry volunteers. That needs to be improved.

Case studies taken from the local church should be utilized more often. I used one the first week and table leaders discussed possible solutions at length. The exercise challenged participants to think and apply the class lesson. Unfortunately, the move to online put an end to case studies by table groups.

### **In-Person Teaching**

I will teach future classes in person. While there is some value in online instruction, it is not the best vehicle for this class. The online platform does not allow for as much interaction during class time and makes break out groups difficult. I felt compelled to fill the silences during online class. Perhaps it is the camera, or fear of silence while I am on the screen. The camera raised my self-consciousness while teaching. Likely this is the awareness that all the participants were focused on me without the energy or distraction

of other people in a classroom. Whatever the reason, I perceived that my teaching was not at its best online.

### **More Table Leaders**

In future classes, I need to lead through table leaders more intentionally. I met with table leaders prior to in-person sessions and via phone or text once we moved online. This interaction was not enough. I did not challenge table leaders to go after their table participants nearly enough. Twenty-five percent of the class dropped out after we moved online and never returned. I did not challenge table leaders to contact those dropouts. Nor did I ask for a weekly report of contacts, strengths, or weaknesses from the table leaders. Further, table leaders should follow up with their table group weekly to see if they are applying the lessons learned in class to their ministry.

Skilled table leaders could serve as coaches for their table groups during the following ministry season, since they already have a level of trust with ministry leaders. Table leaders should have a greater role in future classes. Increasing the role of table leaders will require more time from me before class sessions but has the potential to bear great fruit in leadership development.

### **More Sessions**

As mentioned in the weakness section of this chapter, there was too much material for each ninety-minute session. Sessions 1, 2, and 4 need to be divided. Session 1 should define and illustrate leadership. The four qualities of effective leaders should be briefly introduced and made part of the pre-class assignment for session 2. Then, session 2 should deal with those four qualities at length. The current session 2 should also be divided into two new sessions—one dealing with the power of purpose and the next with the people who lead ministry.

Session 4 should be divided into at least two sessions. The first part of the existing session 4 is sufficient for a stand-alone session (Revelation). The second part of



session 4 should be part of an additional session that allows plenty of classroom time for exercising the observation, interpretation, application process. This would add three sessions for a total of nine. Another option is to break this into two leadership development classes rather than rushing through the material in one.

### **Memory Work**

Another addition to future classes would be memory work. I will select and emphasize three memory verses (one for each section of the curriculum—character, purpose, and skill). Table leaders and I will learn the verses in advance, and the verses will be part of the pre-class worksheet leading up to class. Table groups can provide encouragement and accountability for participants.

### **Online Resources**

One advantage of the online experience was that it taught participants the value of online leadership resources. The curriculum should be made available for download by students who have registered. Further, table leaders, class rosters, case studies, memory work, and additional reading resources would be helpful to have online.

One weakness that has already been resolved was the clunky process of gathering paper surveys and evaluating data from 36 participants. After this class, the pre/post-test survey was turned into an online survey that could be taken by participants as part of registration prior to the first class. Data can now be gathered and analyzed without having to sort through multiple copies of the same paper survey taken by participants twice.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the online survey could be revised to address specific ministry leader roles in the local church.

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<sup>10</sup> See appendix 1 for survey.

## **Spiritual Gifts**

The curriculum should add a section on spiritual gifts, which will fit naturally in session 5 under the heading of “calling.” Knowing and understanding spiritual gifts would likely be helpful for members considering where best to serve. A spiritual gifts inventory would also provide an additional tool for ministry leaders who are recruiting volunteers.<sup>11</sup>

## **Recognize Achievement**

One additional change that I would suggest is to award certificates for those who successfully complete the course. Success would be defined as attending at least 2/3 of the total sessions, learning the verses, and perhaps completing some sort of exercise or project with their table group. People who complete this course should be appropriately honored. This may encourage participants to move on to future classes in the leadership development process. For example, training for specific ministries or preparation for deacon or elder or staff.

## **Theological Reflections**

### **The Gospel Above All**

Preparing, teaching, and evaluating this project reinforced my deeply held conviction that God has called his church to reach the world with the gospel. The Great Commission towers over everything in church life. We gather, worship, learn, and serve so that we may glorify God by furthering his mission to save those who are far from him. Ephesians 2 explains God’s purpose in salvation eloquently: “So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast” (vv. 7-9).

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<sup>11</sup> Crossroads provides an online spiritual gift inventory at <https://spiritualgiftsdiscovery.com/assessment>.

The gospel is the right answer for turning around a human life and a church. The gospel holds out the hope of eternal life. The gospel answers the deepest need of humankind—especially in today’s time of political upheaval. The gospel addresses race, gender, justice, sexuality, and the best hope for humanity. Christians wrestle with these fundamental human issues just as the culture does, but believers should see these issues from a gospel frame of reference. The gospel is more needed and practical than ever in American culture.

### **The Power of God’s Word**

The power of God’s Word also deeply impacted me. The Scriptures are the authority that stands over the dozens of leadership books and articles I researched for this project. God’s Word equips his people so that they are prepared for every good work. The pastor who regularly, unapologetically, and accurately proclaims God’s Word gives the congregation a mighty gift. The curriculum for this project was founded upon and suffused with Scripture. This biblical foundation communicates to participants the fundamental value of God’s Word.

### **A Beautiful Church**

Through this project I was also reminded of the beauty of the church. God’s people come from every tribe, tongue, and nation. They are imperfect and impatient; they bite and devour each other at times. However, in the face of the coronavirus, our church flexed its muscles, raised significant funds, and greatly increased our outreach to the community. Dozens of potential ministry leaders sought training so they could serve well. What looked like a loss, became a great gain. There is a lesson there for pastors and members alike—the Lord Jesus is sovereign and will build his church the way he sees fit, because God is at work in the world today through the local church.

## **Personal Reflections**

Jesus Christ changed my life as a seventeen-year old when I embraced the gospel. A year later I yielded to my growing conviction that God was calling me into ministry. That conversion and call has guided my decisions for the past 38 years, through college, marriage, graduate school, children, a move to Chicago, church planting, and now a doctorate.

My life and ministry have been shaped by two Bible texts. First, I strive to live my life in accordance with the aspiration expressed in Philippians 3:13-14: “One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Second, I strive to shape my ministry after the testimony of 2 Corinthians 4:5: “What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

Pastoring is hard, consuming work. That reality held up this project for two years, during which our church added two campuses, built an education building, changed six staff members, and endured some internal conflict over ministry direction. I could not focus on the project during those days. By the end of that season I was fatigued. I am grateful that we navigated that time with unity and are now enjoying a new season of growth.

I rejoiced when our elders recently insisted that I take my sabbatical, which was three years overdue. The time away from leading day to day ministry freed my mind to concentrate on finishing the final few chapters. I was reminded how important community is to our Christian faith. This doctorate, should it be granted, will be earned in part by my wife, elders, staff, and four generous members who provided me time to think and write at their vacation homes. We are better together.

### **The Value of Leadership**

I was also reminded of the value of leadership in growing a local church. I can be away from Crossroads for several months because, over the years, we have developed

a strong staff. We also have strong, godly elders, who love and care for me. Finally, our congregation has the maturity to value my education.

This project focused on developing leaders. I am more committed to that value here at the end than when I started. The next chapter of my pastoral ministry will be increasingly devoted to raising additional leaders. The two things that will outlive me will be the people in whom I invest and the things I write. This project challenged me to work on both. I pray that the results will far outlast my personal contributions.

### **Conclusion**

My wife, Vicki, went through breast cancer treatment, including surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy during my doctoral program. All the while, she served on staff, managed our home with excellence, and joined me in welcoming our first two grandchildren. She has earned the praise she receives. I thank God for her every day.

This project grew out of the need for ministry leaders at Crossroads, the church I pastor. Yet, our current leaders are responsible, in large part, for this project being completed. I want to thank the staff and elders of Crossroads for their unbending support and encouragement throughout this process. I am also thankful for the students who attended the class that I taught as part of this project. They stuck by the stuff through a flood and the great coronavirus pandemic of 2020—and they finished. So many of them have served faithfully at Crossroads during a crazy time. I am richer for having taught them.

I am also thankful for the faculty of Southern Seminary. Matthew Haste, my advisor, has been a constant source of encouragement. Our very first phone conversation lit a fire that has not yet burned out. He motivated me more in four months than others have over the past four years. Thank you.

APPENDIX 1  
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT  
COURSE CLASS SURVEY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to help us understand our current ministry volunteers. This research is being conducted by Scott Nichols for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project. You will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

**Directions:** Our goal is to strongly support those who serve in ministry at Crossroads. The following questions will help us understand a little about who is serving our people. Please mark the appropriate answer. Answer quickly—do not overthink your answer.

**Personal Background**

1. I am... (check all that apply)
  - Male  Completed graduate degree
  - Female  Believer for five years or less
  - Attend a small group or Sunday school class regularly
  - Less than 50 years old  Believer for more than five years
  - Currently serve a ministry  Have children
  - Married  Completed college degree
  - Single
  - Member at Crossroads for five at Crossroads years or less
  - Member at Crossroads for more than five years
2. How long have you been a believer in Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have a devotional or quiet time more than twice a week? (circle one)  
Yes No
4. Please rate in order from 1-4 which ministry you believe stimulates growth in your spiritual life (1 = the most growth 4 = the least growth):  
\_\_\_Worship service \_\_\_Sunday message \_\_\_Small groups \_\_\_Serving a ministry

5. What is your biggest frustration/fear about serving in a ministry at Crossroads?

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6. What can Crossroads do that would help you most as you serve in a ministry?

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### Ministry Background

Thinking about the primary ministry where you lead/serve, circle the appropriate answer below using the following scale:

**SD** = strongly disagree, **D** = disagree, **N** = neutral, **A** = agree, **SA** = strongly agree

- |   |    |   |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 7. I understand the purpose of the ministry where I serve                           | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 8. I believe a person's character will directly impact their ministry effectiveness | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 9. I understand the character qualities expected for those who serve                | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 10. I understand biblical expectations for ministry leaders                         | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 11. I have sufficient biblical knowledge as required by this ministry               | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 12. I need additional biblical training for this ministry                           | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 13. I understand the practical expectations for this ministry                       | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 14. I need more practical training  | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 15. I am confident I can recruit new volunteers for this ministry                   | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 16. I am confident I can train new volunteers for this ministry                     | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 17. I know how to provide spiritual care for those who serve in this ministry       | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 18. I know how to measure success for this ministry                                 | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 19. I believe I am successful in this ministry                                      | SD | D | N | A | SA |

### **Church Support**

20. Crossroads provides adequate training for this ministry	SD	D	N	A	SA
21. Crossroads provides clear and high-quality material/curriculum/literature for this ministry	SD	D	N	A	SA
22. Crossroads provides adequate space for this ministry	SD	D	N	A	SA
23. Crossroads provides adequate communication to/about this ministry to our congregation	SD	D	N	A	SA
24. I believe that this ministry helps Crossroads achieve its purpose	SD	D	N	A	SA

### **Personal Leadership**

25. I receive honest feedback well	SD	D	N	A	SA
26. I accept responsibility for the ministry where I serve	SD	D	N	A	SA
27. I am confident I can communicate expectations to volunteers	SD	D	N	A	SA
28. I am confident I can pray in public	SD	D	N	A	SA
29. I am confident reading the Bible in public	SD	D	N	A	SA
30. I am confident speaking before others	SD	D	N	A	SA
31. I am confident I can prepare and deliver a Bible study	SD	D	N	A	SA
32. I am confident I can teach a class in church	SD	D	N	A	SA
33. I am confident I can lead a home Bible study	SD	D	N	A	SA
34. I am confident I could lead a person to faith in Christ	SD	D	N	A	SA



### Ministry Leadership

- |   |    |   |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 35. A ministry leader should have proven experience in the business or educational world        | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 36. A ministry leader must know the Bible well to lead effectively                              | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 37. A ministry leader should model godly character to lead effectively                          | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 38. A ministry leader will be deeply impacted by their family life in ministry leadership       | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 39. A ministry leader must do the work required in the ministry they serve                      | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 40. A ministry leader must develop the gifts and abilities of those who serve in their ministry | SD | D | N | A | SA |

APPENDIX 2

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COURSE  
EVALUATION RUBRIC

<b>Developing Ministry Leaders Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>Lesson One Evaluation</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The curriculum is relevant to the issue of ministry leadership in the local church					
The curriculum is clear					
The curriculum clarifies the purpose of the local church					
The curriculum teaches biblical truth accurately					
The curriculum builds a biblical case for developing ministry leaders within the local church					
The curriculum demonstrates the priority of character for ministry leaders					
The curriculum covers practical application of the material to the local church setting					
The curriculum includes material useful to ministry leaders in a local church					

## APPENDIX 3

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COURSE: A SIX-WEEK CURRICULUM

The following curriculum was taught to thirty participants at Crossroads Community Church in Carol Stream, Illinois, as part of this DMin project. The curriculum includes notes for six sessions and pre-class assignments for sessions 2-6. The curriculum falls into three broad categories. Sessions 1-2 define leadership and highlight the importance of character in the one who leads; sessions 3-4 focus on biblical content that drives the purpose and mission of the church; and sessions 5-6 examine eight skills that leaders should develop in a local church setting. The three appendices for the curriculum include questions about the student's experience in class, a self-evaluation survey, and a list of resources for further reading.

May 18, 2020

*"The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people" (1 Samuel 13:14).*

*"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them . . . the one who leads, with zeal" (Romans 12:6-7).*

*"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13:7).*

*"This point is critical – no one but the head of an organization can make it healthy." <sup>1</sup>*

Leaders are essential in the home, education, business, and our church. The best leaders deeply influence others with their character and skill. Effective leaders inspire others to grow so that an organization achieves its goals. Ineffective leaders frustrate others and inhibit achievement. Effective leaders understand that they serve a mission that will make a lasting difference in our world. So, leadership matters in the local church where the stakes are high, the cause is good, and the mission is clear: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations"* (Matthew 28:19).

The study is designed to teach the character and skills required to lead well. You will strengthen your leadership in any organization when you apply these lessons. However, my goal is to develop leaders within the local church who model character, understand the church's mission, and possess the skills necessary to lead others to achieve that mission.

The study is designed with two parts: **The preview worksheet** should be completed before each session. This worksheet reviews the previous session and explores biblical material related to the session that follows (there is no pre-class work for session one). We will complete the **session notes** during our time together. Each session will include prayer, lecture, discussion, and table talk (you will be divided into table groups for discussion).

We will not become better leaders simply by completing a class. But practicing what we learn will set us on a path to leadership growth. And those who have responsibility within the church should grow because churches will not rise above the level of its leaders. *"A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher"* (Luke 6:40).

Serving with gladness,

**Pastor Scott Nichols**

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Lencioni, *The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), xv.

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## Session One: Essentials of Effective Leadership

**Main Truth:** Effective leaders serve and sacrifice for others in pursuit of a worthy goal.

### Session Goals:

- To define leadership.
- To learn four qualities of effective leaders.

We need effective leaders in our homes, businesses, and churches. No organization becomes strong by accident. Leaders must set the culture and the direction for the organizations they serve. In this session, we will define leadership and explore qualities of effective leaders.

### Defining Leadership

*"Look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people" (Exodus 18:21).*

*"Whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:26).*

*"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God" (Acts 20:28).*

*"If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach" (1 Timothy 3:1-2).*

*"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13:7).*

Based on the quotes above, briefly summarize what the Bible values in leadership.

- 
- 
- 

I define a leader as one who \_\_\_\_\_ others to achieve a worthy goal. In the words of John Maxwell, leadership "*all boils down to one idea: influence.*"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John C. Maxwell and Jim Dornan, *Becoming A Person of Influence* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), preface. See also Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2018), 3-5.

## Qualities of Effective Leaders

Effective leaders share certain qualities regardless of their context – business, education, sport, or church. Here are four qualities of effective leadership (with evaluation questions) that we will explore in this session:<sup>3</sup>

- \_\_\_\_\_ - Am I whole? Do I model what I ask others to be? Do I model faith in God, optimism, humility, toughness, and the courage to confront?
- \_\_\_\_\_ - Do I know where I am going? Have I wrestled with God until I am clear on his mission for me during this season? Do I feel a holy discontent?
  - “The central task for leaders is inspiring a *shared* vision.”<sup>4</sup>
  - “*Where there is no vision the people run wild*” (Proverbs 29:18, my paraphrase)
  - “*The bravest . . . have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding go out to meet it.*” Thucydides
- \_\_\_\_\_ - Do I serve a larger mission? Am I serving God’s agenda, not my own? Am I selfless in pursuit of the vision?
- \_\_\_\_\_ - Do I enable others to succeed? Can I lead others to accomplish difficult tasks? Do I trust others and express gratitude for their contributions?
  - “*Focusing on serving others’ needs rather than one’s own builds trust in a leader. The more people trust their leaders, and each other, the more they take risks, make changes, and keep moving ahead.*”<sup>5</sup>

## Jesus’ Example of Leadership

The New Testament demonstrates the important role leaders play in building healthy churches.<sup>6</sup> God calls those who would lead his church to follow Christ, model Christlikeness for others, and skillfully lead his church to achieve its mission to make, baptize, and teach more followers. Jesus himself taught his first followers a powerful lesson on leadership.

Read Matthew 20:20-28 and answer the following questions.

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<sup>3</sup> This list reflects the influence of the five practices of exemplary leadership outlined in James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 6th ed. (Hoboken, NJ, Wiley & Sons, 2017), 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 108.

<sup>5</sup> Kouzes and Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 18.

<sup>6</sup> See for example Acts, Philippians, Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus.

- What do you think the disciples were requesting by sitting at Jesus’ side in the Kingdom?
- What does Jesus’ reply say about leadership in his Kingdom?
- How is leadership in Jesus’ Kingdom different than that in the world in general?

James and John (and their mother) seemed to think that leadership was mostly about what they would get out of it. They were focused on rewards. Jesus reversed that thinking and taught that true leaders serve and sacrifice for those that they lead. Here are two leadership truths:

- Leadership is about \_\_\_\_\_ others, not being served (22-23).
  - *When I serve, I am willing to do what God asks me to do.*
- Leadership demands \_\_\_\_\_ (25-28).
  - *When I sacrifice, I am willing to become what God wants me to be.*

**Review**

During this session we defined leadership as influencing others toward achieving a goal. In addition, we listed four qualities effective leaders share: *Integrity, Vision, Humility, and Generosity*. Finally, we looked at Jesus’ example of leadership. Complete the chart below from your own experience when a leader served or sacrificed for the vision.

	Served	Sacrificed
Pastor/elder/deacon		
Small group leader		
Worship team member		
Hospitality team member		
Children’s volunteer		
Finance team member		
Facilities worker		



## **Previewing Session Two**

*(Do this before class.)*

Last week we introduced the idea that leadership is influencing others toward a goal. And we listed four qualities effective leaders share: *Integrity, Vision, Humility, and Generosity*. This week we will discover two powerful resources every leader possesses: purpose and people. These resources are the same whether we lead our home, business, school, or church.

But our focus is on leadership within the local church, so we will examine how ministry leaders can unify and align energy and resources toward achieving the church's purpose. Leaders are more likely to achieve their ministry goals when they align people and efforts around purpose. Effective leaders know purpose *and* communicate it to those they serve.

### **Purpose**

Purpose is a powerful thing. It channels effort, unifies people, reduces the fear of change, and clarifies success. Jesus gave his church its purpose. Every healthy church should serve that purpose. In preparation for this session, read the following New Testament texts that relate to the purpose of the church.

- According to Matthew 28:1-15, how did the disciples respond to Jesus' resurrection?
- In Matthew 28:16-20, what did Jesus commission his followers to do in response to his resurrection?
- Why would it be important that Jesus promised to be with his followers?
- In Acts 2:32-41, Peter preached his first sermon. What is the heart of his message?
- How did people respond to Peter's message?
- How does this experience fulfill the Great Commission?

## People

Great purposes are only fulfilled when people work together. There are many ways people serve the church, but God calls some people to lead others. The New Testament lists two broad categories of those who lead ministry: pastors/elders/overseers<sup>7</sup> and deacons. These offices cover a wide range of ministry efforts including teaching, caring, serving, finances, elder care, administration, and more.<sup>8</sup> Read the texts below that describe the duties and qualifications of pastors/elders and deacons.

### Pastor/elder/overseer

- 1 Timothy 3:1-7 lists many qualifications for overseers. Which ones surprise you?
- In 1 Peter 5:1-4, what does Peter demand of those who serve as elders?

### Deacon

The New Testament does not record specific duties for a deacon, but Acts 6:1-7 provides an excellent example of how to meet the practical ministry needs every church faces. Read the text and answer the questions below.<sup>9</sup>

- What problem did this church face?
- How did the elders and congregation work together to solve this problem?
- 1 Timothy 3:8-13 lists the qualifications for deacon. Read through the list and write out any questions you have.

---

<sup>7</sup> The words are used interchangeably in multiple New Testament texts (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 1 Pet 5:1-4). The King James Version uses “Bishop” where modern translations use “Overseer”

<sup>8</sup> Acts 6:1-7, 20:28; Rom 12:3-21; Eph 4:11-16; 1 Tim 3:1-13, 5:1-18; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 4:7-11.

<sup>9</sup> The word used for “serve” in this text is the root from which the word “deacon” comes. A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman, 1930), 3:73.

## Session Two: Two Powerful Leadership Resources

**Main Truth:** Effective leaders understand and develop the power of purpose and people.

### Session Goals:

- To learn the power of purpose for those who lead.
- To understand the power of modeling high character for those who lead.

### The Power of Purpose

Last session we learned that effective leaders serve and sacrifice for others in pursuit of a worthy goal. This week we will discover two resources that help leaders achieve the organization's goal: purpose and people. Purpose channels our energy toward a goal, while people work to achieve the goal. Purpose drives vision – a clear picture of where we are going. *“There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared.”*<sup>10</sup>

God has a breathtaking vision for his church – people from every nation redeemed for his glory. Revelation previews the vision achieved: *“Worthy are you . . . for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God”* (Revelation 5:9-10). That is our future! This universal vision should unify a church and drive energy toward achieving it.

### Defining the Church's Purpose

Jesus taught his purpose early and often. His first followers did not fully grasp his purpose until after the resurrection, so he repeated the purpose five times to be sure that they (and we) understood.<sup>11</sup> In this session we will explore the Great Commission, which established the purpose for the church: to make disciples from all nations (“all ethnicities”).<sup>12</sup>

The Great Commission includes one command, “make disciples”, with three parts.

- Make disciples as you go. (Notice that Jesus promises to be with us as we go.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ disciples.
- \_\_\_\_\_ disciples.

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<sup>10</sup> Burt Nanus, *Visionary Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Matt 16:18, Matt 28:18-20; Mark 8:31, Mark 16:15; Luke 9:22, 51, 24:46-49; John 1:12-14, 3:16-17, 11:25-26, 20:21-31; Acts 1:8.

<sup>12</sup> Transliterated, the Greek is *panta ta ethne*, which means “all the nations/ethnicities.” See A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville Broadman, 1930) 1:245. Colin Brown ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 2:793.

## The Power of People

Achieving the church's purpose requires gifted and godly people who can lead others to pursue that purpose. In other words, leaders must get things done through others. In the church, most of us lead volunteer teams. This is both joyful and challenging. Joyful because volunteers are willing to give their time and talent to serve the mission. Leadership is challenging because our influence is purely voluntary. We neither hire nor fire volunteers – they do not take a paycheck. So, those who lead must focus on purpose and model God's goodness in their day-to-day lives. Effective church leaders understand that their character deeply influences those they serve.

The New Testament describes two ministry roles in the local church: pastor/elder/overseer<sup>13</sup> and deacon. These ministry leaders must meet rigorous character qualities. These qualifications focus on character more than skills or education because these leaders serve as role models of Christian maturity.<sup>14</sup>

### Pastor/elder/overseer

A pastor/elder/overseer cares for, sets the example, and leads the flock. They should teach God's word, care for people, prepare people to serve, and share the gospel with unbelievers (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 4:11-5:20; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 5:2-4).

- Pastors \_\_\_\_\_. “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God” (Acts 20:28).
- Overseers \_\_\_\_\_ the church by godly example and patient endurance (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 1 Peter 5:2).
- Elders serve as \_\_\_\_\_ examples (1 Timothy 3:2-7; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 5:3). The primary qualification is to be “above reproach” (*lit. not taken hold of*).<sup>15</sup>
- The New Testament qualifications for pastors/elders/overseers are listed on the next page. Look over the list and make a note of any questions. We will discuss some of these qualifications in detail.

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<sup>13</sup> The words are used interchangeably. See n8 on p. 12 for more detail.

<sup>14</sup> See for example Luke 6:40; 1 Cor 11:1; 1 Tim 4:12-16; 1 Pet 5:3.

<sup>15</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930), 4:572.

above reproach  
sober-minded  
self-controlled  
respectable  
able to teach  
not a drunkard  
not quarrelsome  
not a lover of  
money

not a recent convert  
not conceited  
reputable  
lover of good  
not arrogant  
not quick-tempered  
not greedy  
upright  
holy

disciplined  
gentle  
not violent  
hospitable (loves strangers)  
manages his household well  
holds firmly to the  
trustworthy word  
husband of one wife (not  
polygamous/promiscuous)

### Questions:

#### Deacon

The qualifications for deacon are nearly the same as those for pastor. This speaks of the great responsibility deacons share to be examples to God's church. The duties of a deacon are not detailed in the New Testament, but we have many examples of people serving the practical needs of God's people.

- Deacon comes from the root word meaning \_\_\_\_\_ (raising dust).<sup>16</sup>
- The qualifications for deacon are listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-14. Deacons must be dignified, blameless, tested, not double tongued, and not be addicted to much wine. Deacons must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, not be greedy, or slanderers, must be willing to serve, sober-minded, faithful, the husband of one wife, and manage their own children/household well.
- Deacons are to be tested/proved before they serve.
- The Bible mentions rewards for those who serve as deacons (1 Timothy 3:13).
  - Good \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Great \_\_\_\_\_ in their faith.
- Deacons at our church are responsible for meeting practical ministry needs.
  - Leading ministry teams
  - Assisting the pastors/elders in serving the church
  - Preparing the Lord's Supper and baptism
  - Assisting in ministry to widows and the needy
  - Caring for the building

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<sup>16</sup> Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 3:73.

## **Review**

This week we learned that effective leaders understand and communicate purpose to those they serve. Those leaders also model high character for those they lead.

- How would you connect your ministry with the church's purpose?
- What might be signs of a team that has lost focus on purpose?
- What is one way you can communicate purpose to your team this week?
- How do your attitudes, words, and behaviors reflect God's goodness?

## Previewing Session Three

*(Do this before class.)*

Last session we learned about two resources every leader has: purpose and people. In this session, we will learn three truths that form the heart of our Christian faith. The better leaders understand these truths, the better they will be equipped to lead his people. We will divide these truths into three sections: *God is good, Humankind is fallen, Jesus redeems*. As you prepare for this week's session, read the following Bible texts and answer the questions.

### God is Good

- How does Psalm 96 describe God/the LORD?
- According to Psalm 96, how are we invited to respond to the LORD?
- According to Isaiah 40, how does God demonstrate his care for humanity?

### Humankind is Fallen

- How does Genesis 1 (especially 1:27-31) describe mankind as originally created?
- According to Genesis 3, what were some consequences of Adam and Eve's sin?

Adam and Eve experienced guilt, shame, separation, conflict, blame, and ultimately, death. And they passed along that legacy to their descendants – us. This is the great mystery of our race: We are created in the image of God with great dignity, value, and potential. But we fall short. We sin. We experience guilt, shame, conflict, and separation, from God and one another. The Bible speaks honestly about humanity's potential and deep flaws.

- How does Romans 1:18-3:20 describe humanity?

## Jesus Redeems

Honestly, Romans 1-3 is grim reading – kind of like reading history. But God does not leave our race without hope. The next paragraph of Romans explains God’s plan for redemption.

- Read Romans 3:21-26 and describe how “the righteousness of God” comes to us.
- How does 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 describe the gospel?

The truths we have just read are not theoretical; they require a response. Some reject this truth; others believe. Ephesians 2:1-10 reads like the spiritual autobiography of every person who knows the truth and responds by believing. Take a few moments to read that text. Then, write out the story of how God changed you when you believed in Jesus.

- Before I trusted Jesus, I was . . .
- Here is how I trusted Jesus . . . (Be specific.)
- Since I trusted Jesus, I have . . . (What difference did Jesus make?)



## Session Three: Three Truths Every Church Leader Must Understand

**Main Truth:** Church leaders must understand three fundamental truths of our Faith.

**Session Goal:** To understand that God is good, humankind is fallen, and Jesus Christ saves.

Last session we looked at two resources leaders possess: purpose and people. This session we will explore three fundamental truths of our Faith – God is good, Humankind is fallen, and Jesus Christ came to save the world. Effective church leaders must understand and believe these truths. They should live out their faith and lead others to do the same. Here are three truths church leaders must understand:

### God is Good (Psalm 96)

God is holy, glorious, all powerful, righteous, and supremely loving. He is great and to be feared. One day, God will judge us. In short, God is good – he provides for and saves us.

- God is good. He \_\_\_\_\_ us (Psalm 96:1-3).
- God is great. He \_\_\_\_\_ us (Psalm 96:4-6).
- God is righteous. He will \_\_\_\_\_ us (Psalm 96:7-13).

### Humankind is Fallen (Genesis 1:27-31; Psalm 8; Romans 3:9-20, 5:12)

God created every human being with infinite value and eternal worth. Humankind has great dignity rooted in our special creation in the image of God. Yet even with this value and dignity, still we struggle with failure, sin, feeling far from God, and missing our life's purpose.

- God created us to live in relationship with \_\_\_\_\_ and with \_\_\_\_\_. We are made to love and be loved. This drives our craving for genuine love and friendship and explains the pain of loneliness and betrayal.
- God created every human being to serve a \_\_\_\_\_ in this world. This drives our search for meaning and explains the joy we find in doing fulfilling work with excellence.
- Humankind is \_\_\_\_\_. Though created in God's image, our race fell into sin. The Fall brought spiritual death and, ultimately, physical death, resulting in separation from God. This is the natural condition of all humanity. We are in desperate spiritual shape – we are depraved. *“The doctrine of depravity has to do, not with man's estimation of man, but rather with God's estimation of man.”*<sup>17</sup> Those who die in this condition are eternally separated from God (Romans 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-10; Revelation 20:11-15). We all need a savior.

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<sup>17</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things Which Become Sound Doctrine* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1965), 17.

### **Jesus Redeems (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)**

Although our sin separates us from him, God bridged this gulf by providing salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ. God desires and works in history to redeem all people to himself (1 Timothy 2:3-6; 1 John 1:8-2:2). This redemption (salvation) is provided by faith in Jesus Christ who died and rose again. Those who believe in Jesus Christ are forgiven, redeemed, saved, and transformed. Here is how Jesus saves:

- God sent Jesus Christ into the world to save sinners. He is God in the flesh. This is called the “incarnation” (Luke 1:31-35, 19:10; John 1:12-14; Galatians 4:4-6).
- Jesus Christ died for our sins. He is the sinless sacrifice. He bore humankind’s sin in his body, thus turning away God’s righteous wrath at sin. This is called "substitutionary atonement" (Matthew 20:28; John 10:14-18; Romans 5:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:2; Colossians 1:19-20; Hebrews 9:11-14, 27-28; 1 Peter 2:24-25, 3:18; 1 John 2:2).
- Jesus Christ arose, \_\_\_\_\_, from the grave, proving his claim to be God and earning the right to give eternal life (Luke 24:6-7; Acts 2:24; Romans 1:1-7; 1 Cor. 15:12-20). His resurrection brings blessings for believers.
  - Eternal life (Romans 8:11, 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:16-19)
  - The Holy Spirit (Acts 2:32-33)
  - Power to live a new life (2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Ephesians 2:4-10)
  - Assurance of salvation (Ephesians 1:18-20; 1 Peter 1:3-5)
  - Provision for our needs (Philippians 3:10, 4:13)
  - The promise of our own resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:51-58)
- Jesus’ gift of salvation requires a \_\_\_\_\_. We must repent and believe to be saved (John 1:12, 14:6; Acts 4:12, 20:21; Romans 5:1, 10:9-13; 1 Timothy 1:15, 2:5-6).
  - Repentance is a change of mind leading to a change in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Faith is steadfast belief in the gospel (Romans 10:9-13; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Galatians 2:16, 20; Ephesians 2:8-10; Colossians 2:6-7).

### **What does this have to do with leadership?**

What does all this theology have to do with leadership? God has commissioned his church to bear his gospel to the entire world. This call is for every believer in our home, business, school, or the church. We are called to live out the gospel.

Those who lead in the church are especially called to guide and care for the congregation so that they might pursue God’s mission to make, baptize, and teach additional followers of Jesus Christ. Churches fail when they get sidetracked by lesser missions. The Scriptures call church leaders to:

- Guard the gospel truth as a trust given to the church (2 Corinthians 4:5-7; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 1:14, 2:2; Titus 1:9; Jude 3-4, 24-25).

- Seek the lost, feed the flock, and care for those who are weak and wounded (Ezekiel 34:4-6; Matthew 28:19; Acts 20:28; Galatians 6:2).
- Build up those who respond to the gospel (Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 2:6-7).
- Align the church's efforts with God's truth and priorities (1 Timothy 4:6-16).

### **Review**

We covered a lot of ground this week. Here are three truths effective church leaders understand: God is good, Humankind is fallen, and Jesus Christ saves all who believe. How would you explain each one of these truths to someone who asked you? Briefly write your answers below:

- God is good.
- Humankind is fallen.
- Jesus saves.

Leading others within the local church brings great responsibility and reward. How are you doing?

- How do these truths inform the care you provide the team you lead during this season?
- How is your ministry advancing the gospel mission during this season?
- Read the following texts to see what rewards ministry leaders can expect to receive:
  - Matthew 19:27-30, 25:34-40
  - 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10
  - Galatians 6:9-10
  - 2 Timothy 4:5-8
  - Revelation 19:6-9, 22:7-14

## Previewing Session Four

*(Do this before class.)*

Knowing and living God's word grows our faith and our leadership skill. His word comforts, instructs, equips, nourishes, and guides us. We learn about God's character and actions in history. We see the unfolding of God's magnificent plan for creation, redemption, restoration, and consummation. We understand our part in God's plan. Most importantly, we meet the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our savior.

### Understanding the Bible

Last session we learned three truths that every leader should understand: God is good, humankind is fallen, and Jesus Christ saves. In this session we will learn about the Bible. The Bible is not a systematic theology book, but a library of 66 books written over 1500 years by forty authors on three continents. The Old Testament points forward to Jesus Christ. The New Testament records Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection. It also records the church's growth and our hope of final victory.

The Bible is organized like a mini library:

- The Old Testament has 39 books including Law, History, Poetry, and Prophecy
- The New Testament has 27 books including Gospel, History/Acts, Letters, and Prophecy
- Over the years, scholars have divided the Bible books into chapters and verses. These verse markers are helpful for reading and referencing, but the divisions are not original. Reading through one chapter into the next may help us understand the flow of thought. For example, when we read 1 Corinthians 12:31 and on into 13:1 the thought flows smoothly. As we read, we should keep in mind that the Scriptures were often written to be read at one sitting (especially the New Testament letters).

There are many good English translations available today – KJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, and NLT just to name a few. Our church uses the English Standard Version (ESV) because it is a more literal translation.<sup>18</sup> This makes reading more difficult, but allows us to experience the writer's style.

### Learning God's Word

The Scriptures often describe themselves and speak of their benefit for the one who reads. For example, Psalm 119:105 says, "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*" God's word lights my steps (like a lamp on the path ahead). Read the texts on the next page and complete the chart that describes the Scriptures and the benefits they bring the reader:

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<sup>18</sup> "The ESV is an 'essentially literal' translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer . . . Within this framework we have sought to be "as literal as possible" while maintaining clarity of expression and literary excellence." *ESV Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), vii.

Text	Description	Benefit
Psalm 19:7-11		
Psalm 119:97-112		
Isaiah 55:6-13		
2 Timothy 3:16-4:5		
Hebrews 4:12-13		

### Enjoying the Benefits of God’s Word

God’s word instructs, enlightens, equips, examines, and strengthens us for leading others. We gain purpose, stability, insight, and joy from knowing and living the truth of the Bible.<sup>19</sup> When we read the Bible, we learn to love the Author. So, how can I make the Bible a regular part of my reading? You need a plan, a place, a partner, and persistence.

Select a reading **plan** that fits your schedule – there are many available.<sup>20</sup> Find a **place** where you can be undisturbed for a few minutes of reading. Invite a **partner** to read the same plan. This builds accountability and conversation. Finally, be **persistent**. Do not quit. If you miss some days reading, do not worry about catching up, just pick up at the appropriate reading for that day. Remember that persistence pays off. Now, take a few moments and sketch out a reading plan that you will follow.

- My plan:
- My place:
- My partner:

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<sup>19</sup> Josh 1:8; Pss 1, 19, 119; Isa 55; 2 Tim 3:16-4:1.

<sup>20</sup> Consider for example: youversion.com, ESV.org, Bible.com, Biblegateway.com, or search your app store.

## Session Four: Knowing the Word

**Main Truth:** Church leaders should know how to read and understand God’s word.

### Session Goals:

- To understand the nature and power of God’s word.
- To learn a strategy for observing, interpreting, and applying God’s word.

Last session we learned three truths that every leader should understand: God is our good creator. We, as human beings have great value and dignity, but we also have a fallen, sinful nature. So, God sent Jesus Christ to redeem fallen humanity. This is the gospel.

This week we will learn a strategy that will help us understand what we read. The Bible speaks to our deepest hopes and needs, instructs, encourages, protects, and fuels us. It guides relationships within the church. Understanding the Bible equips church leaders to serve others and protects them from blindly embracing or rejecting cultural movements. Below are some Bible facts that equip us to better understand.

### Knowing God’s Word

The Bible is *Revelation* - God revealing truth about himself and his world in two ways:

- *General Revelation* means that God has spoken in creation, history, and my conscience. General revelation reveals that there is a God, and some truth about him, but gives us little information about a relationship with him (Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:18-23).
- *Special Revelation* means that God has spoken through the \_\_\_\_\_ and his son, Jesus Christ (Psalm 19:7-14; Hebrews 1:1-4). Special revelation tell us that Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), turned away God’s righteous wrath at the sins of the whole world (1 John 1:9-2:2), and that he established, commissioned, promised his presence with, and ultimate victory for his church (Matthew 16:8, 28:18-20).

### Three Words about the Bible

The Bible is: *inspired*, has *authority*, and is *illuminated* by God’s Spirit.

- The Bible is inspired. The Holy Spirit superintended the writing so that we have God’s very word (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).  
*“God breathed out his message to human writers, who, without losing their own style and personality, wrote His truth under His divine control. . . the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm . . . Can I rely on it? Absolutely!”<sup>21</sup>*

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<sup>21</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Growing Deep in the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 64.

- The Bible has \_\_\_\_\_ for our faith and daily lives because it is true (Psalm 119:4, 89-90; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- The Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ God’s word so that believers can understand truth that is opaque to unbelievers (I Corinthians 2:12-14).

### Reading to Understand

I use a simple, three-step process to help me understand God’s word: *observation*, *interpretation*, and *application*. These steps, taken carefully and in order, will increase our understanding of God’s Word. Like most new skills, we will need to follow the steps slowly and carefully at first. But once we get the hang of it, these steps become easier to follow. I still follow this process when I prepare a message. “*Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law*” (Psalm 119:18).

### Observation – What does it say?

Observation is the discipline of reading the text slowly, carefully, and observantly to discover what is there; what it says. This is the first step to understanding a Bible text.

- What kind of literature is this? This is called \_\_\_\_\_. We use many genres everyday: *text* – short; *email* – more information; *newspaper* – news, sports, comics; *book* – many facts/characters. The Bible includes *poetry*, *narrative*, *prophecy*, and *letters*.
  - Read the following Bible passages and try to determine the genre.
    - Psalm 23 \_\_\_\_\_
    - Philippians 1:1-6 \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the context? The context is the verses immediately surrounding the passage. We should also consider what the entire chapter and book say. And, we should notice where the book fits into the message of the Bible as a whole.
- What kind of words are used – active, passive, warm, warning, tender, or tough?
- What would a reporter ask of this text – who, what, where, when, why, so what?
- Give this a try in Ephesians 5:17: “*understand what the will of the Lord is.*”
  - Read the entire paragraph (15-21). Does this clarify the meaning?
  - Now, read from 5:1-21. How would you explain the command now?

### **Interpretation – What does it mean?**

Once we gather information, we are ready to interpret the passage. Interpretation is the discipline of determining what the text means within the context. “Interpretation assumes there is, in fact, a proper and improper meaning of a text and care must be taken not to misrepresent the meaning.”<sup>22</sup> We do not ask, “What does this mean *to me*?” We ask, “What does this mean?”

- What did this say to the original recipients? The more we understand what the original message meant, the more likely we are to get the correct interpretation.
- What do Bible scholars say? Consult tools such as a Bible Dictionary, Concordance (a list of Bible words and where they occur in the text), or Bible Encyclopedia. You will often arrive at the same conclusion as a commentary writer, but you did it by your own sweat.
- Give interpretation a try in Proverbs 22:28: “*Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.*” I once heard a preacher say that this means we should not change things the older generation did in church. Can you use the process we learned to determine the meaning?

### **Application – What do I do?**

Application is the discipline of discovering how the meaning of the passage applies to my situation. God’s Word is given to us to obey. Jesus illustrated the value of obeying what we hear in a story he told about two men who built houses. One built on sand and the other on a rock. When the storms came, the house on sand collapsed while the house on the rock stood firm. Jesus then warned that those who listen, but do not obey are “*like a foolish man who built his house on the sand*” (Matthew 7:24, 26). We should ask questions like these to apply the text:

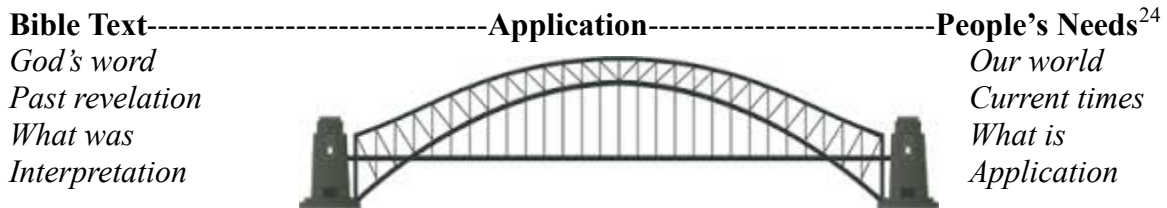
- Does this passage demand I act on my: attitudes, actions, relationships, beliefs?
- What does the passage teach me about God’s will or his ways?
- Are there promises or warnings I should act upon in this text?
- Application builds a bridge from the original text to our world. We should “enable God’s revealed truth to flow out of the Scriptures into the lives of men and women today.”<sup>23</sup>

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79. <sup>22</sup> Robert Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010),

<sup>23</sup> John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 138.





**Review**

In this session we learned three characteristics that make the Bible unique. Write a sentence or two explaining the truths we learned:

- What does it mean that the Bible is inspired?
- Why does the Bible have authority?
- What does it mean that the Holy Spirit illuminates the Bible when believers read?

We also learned a three-step process for discerning the meaning of a passage of Scripture. Try the observation/interpretation/application process on the following texts:

- Galatians 5:1-15
  - Observation
  - Interpretation
  - Application
- 1 Timothy 3:1-7
  - Observation
  - Interpretation
  - Application

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<sup>24</sup> Rick Warren, *Preaching for Life Change* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 6, 19.

## Previewing Session Five

*(Do this before class.)*

Last time we learned about the power of God’s word. In this session we will learn three ingredients that are fundamental to effective leadership. In preparation, we will explore valuable leadership lessons from two faith heroes. The young shepherd boy, David, who battled giant Goliath and the Apostle Paul, who faced threats from his own countrymen. Both modeled true character and a deep faith in God. Both teach us that leaders will face hardships that seem overwhelming. But leaders grow when we choose to face those challenges with clear-eyed reality and courageous faith in God.

- Read 1 Samuel 17:1-54 and answer the following questions.
  - How did the Israelites (and King Saul) respond to Goliath’s challenge to fight?
  - What impresses you about David’s response to the same challenge?
  - How did the Israelite army respond after David triumphed over Goliath?
  
- Read Acts 20:17-38 and answer the following questions.
  - Why do you think that Paul began and ended his talk with his personal example (17-21, 32-35)?
  - How did Paul’s understanding of his purpose – “*the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus*” impact his decision-making (22-28)?
  - List some of the priorities on which Paul called elders to focus (25-31):
  - What kind of threats motivated Paul to direct the elders to: “Pay careful attention to yourselves . . . care for the church . . . be alert” (28-31)?

## Session Five: Three Ingredients of Effective Leadership

**Main Truth:** I must lead myself before I can lead others.

**Session Goal:** To learn four ingredients of effective leadership within the church.

Last session we learned a three-step process for reading and understanding God's word: observation, interpretation, and application. In this session we will discover that effective leaders grow their personal leadership so that they can lead others. Here are four ingredients needed to grow our leadership: character, calling, resilience, and humility.

Effective leaders model proven \_\_\_\_\_ (Philippians 2:22; 2 Timothy 2:15). In a church setting we usually lead volunteer teams. This adds level of difficulty because we cannot hire and fire. Therefore, our character is more influential than ever. We will influence others by *being* the kind of person that they trust to lead them. We cannot lead people who do not trust us. Here are some questions that reveal much about my character in a church setting:

- Do I have absolute faith that God is working within me?
- Do I love my family and the people in my ministry, church, and community?
  - Genuine love speaks truth with grace
  - Genuine love serves others
- Are my work habits the overflow of who I am (2 Timothy 2:15)?
  - *"We don't work on Sunday. Our work is displayed on Sunday."*
- Here are some steps to develop our character as leaders:
  - Think right
  - Choose right
  - Have the right role models
  - Always be learning

Effective leaders have settled their \_\_\_\_\_. Every believer is called to serve others (Ephesians 2:8-10). Some believers sense a further call to exercise their gifts in a church setting (Philippians 3:13-14; 1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Peter 5:1-5). Here are some questions to clarify calling:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Internal</u></li></ul> <p>What do you love doing?<br/>What breaks your heart?<br/>What are your spiritual gifts?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>External</u></li></ul> <p>What are your natural gifts?<br/>Where have you had success?<br/>What does a mentor/trusted friend say you are good at doing?</p> |
|---|--|

Effective leaders are \_\_\_\_\_. Can you thrive in the daily grind?

- Can I learn from both success and failure?
- Will you let failure define you? (Be hard on your own sin and gracious with others' sin.)

Effective leaders are \_\_\_\_\_. They serve the mission, not their own comfort or the rewards leadership may provide. Jesus gave us an extreme example of humility by washing his disciples' feet the night before he was crucified. Then he challenged his followers by saying: "*If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them*" (John 13:15-17). Paul modeled humble commitment to mission in his farewell speech to the Ephesian elders: "If only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the grace of God" (Acts 20:20-24).

- Humble leaders know how to use both a window and a mirror.<sup>25</sup>

### Review

This week we learned four ingredients of effective leaders: character, calling, resilience, and humility. Answer the following questions about leadership at church:

- What do you love about the ministry you serve at church?
- What frustrates you about the ministry you serve at church?
- How have you used the window/mirror during a recent success or failure?

Spiritual gifts are special abilities given to every believer by the Holy Spirit. These gifts may or may not reflect our natural abilities. We are called to develop and deploy these gifts to serve the church and build up other believers. Read the following texts and list any questions:

- Romans 12:1-21
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, 13:1-13, 14:1-5, 33, 39-40
- Ephesians 4:1-16
- 1 Peter 4:7-11

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<sup>25</sup> Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 35.

**Previewing Session Six**  
*(Do this before class.)*

This week we conclude our study of leadership in the local church. We will learn four best practices of leadership. But first take a few minutes to review our study up till now:

- Why is leadership valuable in the local church?
- How would you connect the ministry you lead to the purpose of the church?
- How do the following three truths inform your leadership?
  - God is good
  - Humankind is fallen
  - Jesus saves
- How would understanding God's word make you a stronger leader?
- Character, calling, or humility; which is your team wrestling with currently?

**Moses's Leadership Problem**

Moses was one of the greatest leaders in history. He led the Israelites out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, and into the wilderness near Mount Sinai. The people were free, but the weight of leading them all alone soon crushed him. He felt the pressure of leading, instructing, keeping the peace between, and caring for all those people. So, God instructed Moses to gather additional leaders to share the load. And the LORD was specific about what kind of person should be trusted to lead others. Read Exodus 18:13-27 and answer the following questions:

- What were the dangers of Moses doing everything himself (13-18)?
- What kind of people was Moses to look for to share the leadership load (19-21)?
- What benefits would come from adding more of the right kind of leaders (22-23)?

## Session Six: Best Practices of Effective Leadership

**Main Truth:** Effective leaders do a few basic things well over time.

**Session Goal:** To learn four best practices of effective leaders.

Last session we learned about the value of good character, confidence in our calling, and humility. In this session we will learn that effective leaders do a few basic things well over time. These leaders are clear about the purpose they serve and unify their people to work together to achieve that purpose. Effective leaders do not wait for the perfect situation to act, rather, they rally their teams into action. Here are five best practices for leading well.

Effective leaders understand the \_\_\_\_\_ of their organization. Mission defines the tasks we must achieve to fulfill our purpose. Purpose answers: “*Why do we exist?*” Mission answers: “*What do we do?*” Mission clears vision and fuels effort. Next to character, knowing and communicating the mission are the most important skills a leader can develop.

- The church does not create mission, the church executes Jesus’ mission.
- The clearer our mission, the stronger our motivation. Anxiety kills motivation, drives destructive behavior, and lowers performance. Clarity reduces anxiety.
- Can you identify the most pressing mission the ministry you lead faces now?<sup>26</sup>

Effective leaders \_\_\_\_\_ effective teams. Ultimately, our goal is to pastor our team in every situation they face. Here are some ways to build a strong team:

- Define the goal – what does a team win look like?
- Raise the value of the cause – “*It’s easy*” is not an effective recruitment tool.
- Delegate carefully, then hold accountable.
  - Gauge both *willingness* and *ability*.
  - Give high *instruction* and high *support* early. As skill grows give support.
  - Delegate *responsibility* and *authority*.
  - Create open communication by coaching in real time – tell the truth.
  - Apply the “*Hire slow; fire fast*” principle to volunteer teams.
- Recruit, recruit, recruit.

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<sup>26</sup> You may identify your most pressing mission by considering what bothers you the most in your current situation, or what people complain about the most, or what is prohibiting your ministry from achieving its stated purpose.

Effective leaders lead \_\_\_\_\_ change. Change is constant in life, so leaders must risk constructive change in pursuit of the mission. Here are suggestions for leading change:

- Think purpose first – *“Here how change will further our purpose . . .”*
- Honestly evaluate the benefits before you put people through the stress of change.
- Seek permission, not buy-in.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate. John Piper writes eloquently of the risk associated with living our lives on mission to serve Jesus:
  - *“If you live gladly to make others glad in God, your life will be hard, your risks will be high, and your joy will be full. This is not about how to avoid a wounded life, but how to avoid a wasted life . . . Remember, you have one life. That is all. You were made for God. Don’t waste it.”*<sup>27</sup>

Effective leaders \_\_\_\_\_. These leaders pursue their God-called mission with all their hearts, knowing that God blesses great dedication more than great giftedness. *“For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him”* (2 Chronicles 16:9 NIV). Below are some quotes about perseverance:

- *“Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small . . . – never give in. Never give in.”* – (Winston Churchill, October 29, 1941).
- *“I can plod. I can persevere . . . To this I owe everything”* – (William Carey).
- *“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master”* – Jesus, (Matthew 25:23).
- *“Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up”* (Galatians 6:9).

### Questions:

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<sup>27</sup> John Piper, *Don’t Waste Your Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 178.

## Appendix 1 – Follow Up Questions

### Questions

Why is leadership so important in the home, school, business, and in the church?

Why does a person's character matter for leadership in the local church?

How does the ministry you serve further the church's purpose (mission)?

What is the "Gospel" message?

How will understanding what you read in God's word help you be a better leader?

What helped you clarify your calling to serve in your ministry?

Which of the four best practices we learned (*purpose, teambuilding, change, perseverance*) should you focus on right now that would make the biggest difference in your ministry?

How has this study prepared you for leadership in this church through this study?

What would make this study more effective in preparing you for leadership?

### Comments:



## Appendix 2 – Pre and Post Class Test

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Agreement to Participate:** The research in which you are about to participate is designed to help us understand our current ministry volunteers. This research is being conducted by Scott Nichols for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project. You will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

**Directions:** Our goal is to strongly support those who serve in ministry at Crossroads. The following questions will help us understand a little about who is serving our people. Please mark the appropriate answer. Answer quickly—do not overthink your answer.

### Personal Background

1. I am... (check all that apply)

- |  |                                  |  |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male  | <input type="checkbox"/> Female  | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single  | <input type="checkbox"/> Married | <input type="checkbox"/> Have children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College degree  |                                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member less than five years                           |                                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member more than five years                           |                                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a small group or Sunday school class regularly |                                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Currently serve a ministry                            |                                  |  |

2. How long have you been a believer in Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you have a quiet time more than twice a week? Yes No (**circle one**)

4. Please rate in order from **1-4** which ministry you believe stimulates growth in your spiritual life (**1 = the most growth 4 = the least growth**):

\_\_\_Worship service    \_\_\_Sunday message    \_\_\_Small group    \_\_\_Serving

5. What is your biggest frustration/fear about serving in a ministry at Crossroads?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What can Crossroads do that would help you most as you serve in a ministry?

\_\_\_\_\_

### Ministry Background

Thinking about the primary ministry where you lead/serve, circle the appropriate answer below using the following scale:

**SD** = strongly disagree, **D** = disagree, **N** = neutral, **A** = agree, **SA** = strongly agree

- |   |    |   |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 7. I understand the purpose of the ministry where I serve                           | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 8. I believe a person's character will directly impact their ministry effectiveness | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 9. I understand the character qualities expected for those who serve                | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 10. I understand biblical expectations for ministry leaders                         | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 11. I have sufficient biblical knowledge as required by this ministry               | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 12. I need additional biblical training for this ministry                           | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 13. I understand the practical expectations for this ministry                       | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 14. I need more practical training  | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 15. I am confident I can recruit new volunteers for this ministry                   | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 16. I am confident I can train new volunteers for this ministry                     | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 17. I know how to provide spiritual care for those who serve in this ministry       | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 18. I know how to measure success for this ministry                                 | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 19. I believe I am successful in this ministry                                      | SD | D | N | A | SA |

### **Church Support**

20. Crossroads provides adequate training for this ministry	SD	D	N	A	SA
21. Crossroads provides clear and high-quality material/curriculum/literature for this ministry	SD	D	N	A	SA
22. Crossroads provides adequate space for this ministry	SD	D	N	A	SA
23. Crossroads provides adequate communication to/about this ministry to our congregation	SD	D	N	A	SA
24. I believe that this ministry helps Crossroads achieve its purpose	SD	D	N	A	SA

### **Personal Leadership**

25. I receive honest feedback well	SD	D	N	A	SA
26. I accept responsibility for the ministry where I serve	SD	D	N	A	SA
27. I am confident I can communicate expectations to volunteers	SD	D	N	A	SA
28. I am confident I can pray in public	SD	D	N	A	SA
29. I am confident reading the Bible in public	SD	D	N	A	SA
30. I am confident speaking before others	SD	D	N	A	SA
31. I am confident I can prepare and deliver a Bible study	SD	D	N	A	SA
32. I am confident I can teach a class in church	SD	D	N	A	SA
33. I am confident I can lead a home Bible study	SD	D	N	A	SA
34. I am confident I could lead a person to faith in Christ	SD	D	N	A	SA

### Ministry Leadership

- |   |    |   |   |   |    |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 35. A ministry leader should have proven experience in the business or educational world        | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 36. A ministry leader must know the Bible well to lead effectively                              | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 37. A ministry leader should model godly character to lead effectively                          | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 38. A ministry leader will be deeply impacted by their family life in ministry leadership       | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 39. A ministry leader must do the work required in the ministry they serve                      | SD | D | N | A | SA |
| 40. A ministry leader must develop the gifts and abilities of those who serve in their ministry | SD | D | N | A | SA |

### Appendix 3- Further Reading

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APPENDIX 4  
SURVEY DATA AND T-TEST RESULTS

Table A1. Likert scale questions summary in order of question number

Question #	Pre-Test Average	Post-Test Average	Change
7	4.84	4.74	-0.11
8	4.84	4.74	-0.11
9	4.16	4.53	0.37
10	4.42	4.63	0.21
11	4.05	4.26	0.21
12	3.63	3.42	-0.21
13	4.26	4.16	-0.11
14	3.26	3.42	0.16
15	3.42	3.47	0.05
16	3.84	4.05	0.21
17	3.53	3.84	0.32
18	3.47	4.05	0.58
19	3.68	3.74	0.05
20	3.26	3.63	0.37
21	3.26	3.32	0.05
22	4.00	4.05	0.05
23	3.00	3.47	0.47
24	4.47	4.74	0.26
25	3.95	4.16	0.21
26	4.32	4.32	0.00
27	3.95	4.11	0.16
28	4.37	4.42	0.05
29	4.26	4.26	0.00
30	3.84	3.84	0.00
31	3.63	3.84	0.21
32	3.32	3.68	0.37
33	3.74	3.89	0.16
34	3.79	4.05	0.26
35	2.74	3.00	0.26
36	3.84	4.37	0.53
37	4.68	4.79	0.11
38	4.16	4.37	0.21
39	4.42	4.42	0.00
40	4.26	4.53	0.26

Table A2. Likert scale questions summary in order of change

Question #	Pre-Test Average	Post-Test Average	Change
18	3.47	4.05	0.58
36	3.84	4.37	0.53
23	3.00	3.47	0.47
20	3.26	3.63	0.37
9	4.16	4.53	0.37
32	3.32	3.68	0.37
17	3.53	3.84	0.32
34	3.79	4.05	0.26
35	2.74	3.00	0.26
24	4.47	4.74	0.26
40	4.26	4.53	0.26
11	4.05	4.26	0.21
25	3.95	4.16	0.21
10	4.42	4.63	0.21
16	3.84	4.05	0.21
31	3.63	3.84	0.21
38	4.16	4.37	0.21
27	3.95	4.11	0.16
14	3.26	3.42	0.16
33	3.74	3.89	0.16
37	4.68	4.79	0.11
28	4.37	4.42	0.05
15	3.42	3.47	0.05
19	3.68	3.74	0.05
21	3.26	3.32	0.05
22	4.00	4.05	0.05
26	4.32	4.32	0.00
29	4.26	4.26	0.00
30	3.84	3.84	0.00
39	4.42	4.42	0.00
7	4.84	4.74	-0.11
8	4.84	4.74	-0.11
13	4.26	4.16	-0.11
12	3.63	3.42	-0.21

Table A3. Most statistically significant positive results

Question	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Difference
18	3.473684211	4.052631579	0.579
36	3.842105263	4.368421053	0.526
23	3	3.473684211	0.474
32	3.315789474	3.684210526	0.368
20	3.263157895	3.631578947	0.368
9	4.157894737	4.526315789	0.368
24	4.473684	4.736842	0.263
35	2.736842	3	0.263



Table A4. Pre-test demographic data for participants 1-5

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Question 1					
Male or Female	M	F	F	M	M
< 50 Years Old	N	N	N	N	N
Married or Single	M	M	M	M	Y
Have Children	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
College Degree	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Graduate Degree	N	N	Y	N	N
Believer <5 Years	N	N	N	N	N
Member <5 Years	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Attend Group/Class	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Serve in Ministry	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Question 2	55	40		41	29
Question 3	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Question 4					
Worship Service		3		2	
Sunday Message		1		4	
Small Groups		2		3	
Serving in Ministry		4		1	

Table A5. Pre-test demographic data for participants 6-10

	Participant 6	Participant 7	Participant 8	Participant 9	Participant 10
Question 1					
Male or Female	M	F	M	M	M
< 50 Years Old	N	N	N	N	Y
Married or Single	M	M	M	M	M
Have Children	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
College Degree	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Graduate Degree	N	Y	Y	Y	y
Believer <5 Years	N	N	N	N	N
Member <5 Years	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Attend Group/Class	Y	Y	Y	N	
Serve in Ministry	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Question 2	55	18	20	20	34
Question 3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Question 4					
Worship Service	2	1	4	4	4
Sunday Message	1	3	2	3	2
Small Groups	3	4	1	2	1
Serving in Ministry	4	2	3	1	3

Table A6. Pre-test demographic data for participants 11-15

	Participant 11	Participant 12	Participant 13	Participant 14	Participant 15
Question 1					
Male or Female	M	M	F	M	F
< 50 Years Old	N	N	N	N	N
Married or Single	M	S	M	M	Y
Have Children	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
College Degree	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Graduate Degree	N	N	Y	Y	N
Believer <5 Years	N	N	N	N	N
Member <5 Years	Y	N	N	N	Y
Attend Group/Class	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Serve in Ministry	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Question 2	55	50	51	40	38
Question 3	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Question 4					
Worship Service	3	4	4		3
Sunday Message	1	3	3		2
Small Groups	2	2	2		1
Serving in Ministry	4	1	1		4

Table A7. Pre-test demographic data for participants 16-19

	Participant 16	Participant 17	Participant 18	Participant 19
Question 1				
Male or Female	M	M	F	M
< 50 Years Old	N	N	N	N
Married or Single	M	M	M	M
Have Children	Y	Y	Y	Y
College Degree	Y	Y	Y	N
Graduate Degree	N	N	N	N
Believer <5 Years	N	N	N	N
Member <5 Years	Y	Y	Y	Y
Attend Group/Class	N	N	Y	N
Serve in Ministry	Y	Y	Y	N
Question 2	58	58	50	52
Question 3	Y	Y	Y	Y
Question 4				
Worship Service	2	3	4	
Sunday Message	1	2	3	
Small Groups	4	4	1	
Serving in Ministry	3	1	2	

Table A8. Pre-test responses for participants 1-7

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7
Q#							
7	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
8	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
9	4	4	3	5	4	4	5
10	5	4	4	5	4	4	5
11	5	3	3	4	4	2	5
12	3	4	3	3	5	5	3
13	4	4	5	5	4	4	5
14	3	4	2	3	4	4	3
15	4	3	4	4	3	2	4
16	4	2	5	5	5	2	5
17	4	3	3	4	4	1	4
18	3	3	4	5	3	2	3
19	3	3	4	5	4	3	4
20	4	3	4	3	3	3	3
21	5	4	4	3	3	3	3
22	5	5	5	4	4	4	5
23	4	4	2	3	2	4	4
24	5	5	5	5	4	4	5
25	4	4	4	4	3	5	4
26	5	3	4	5	4	5	5
27	4	3	4	5	3	4	5
28	5	4	4	4	4	3	5
29	5	4	3	3	2	4	5
30	5	3	3	4	4	4	3
31	5	4	4	4	4	2	3
32	5	3	3	3	4	1	4
33	5	4	3	4	4	2	3
34	5	4	3	4	5	1	4
35	3	3	1	4	3	3	3
36	4	4	1	4	4	4	4
37	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
38	5	3	3	4	5	4	3
39	5	5	4	4	5	5	5
40	5	3	4	4	3	5	5

Table A9. Pre-test responses for participants 8-14

	Participant 8	Participant 9	Participant 10	Participant 11	Participant 12	Participant 13	Participant 14
Q#							
7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
8	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
9	4	4	4	4	4	5	4
10	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
11	5	4	4	4	4	5	4
12	2	3	4	4	3	4	4
13	5	4	4	5	5	5	5
14	2	4	4	2	4	4	3
15	2	3	5	4	3	4	3
16	4	4	5	3	4	4	4
17	4	3	5	3	3	5	5
18	4	2	4	4	3	5	5
19	4	4	4	4	4	5	3
20	3	3	3	4	4	2	5
21	3	2	3	4	4	2	5
22	5	4	4	4	4	2	5
23	2	3	3	4	3	1	5
24	5	4	4	4	5	5	5
25	4	4	4	4	4	5	3
26	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
27	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
28	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
29	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
30	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
31	3	4	4	2	2	5	4
32	3	3	4	2	2	5	4
33	4	4	4	2	2	5	4
34	4	4	4	3	3	5	4
35	1	3	2	2	2	5	3
36	4	4	2	4	4	5	4
37	5	4	4	4	5	5	5
38	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
39	5	4	4	4	3	5	5
40	4	4	3	4	4	5	5

Table A10. Pre-test responses for participants 15-19

	Participant 15	Participant 16	Participant 17	Participant 18	Participant 19
Q#					
7	5	5	5	5	3
8	5	5	5	5	5
9	4	4	5	4	4
10	4	4	5	4	4
11	4	4	5	4	4
12	3	3	5	5	3
13	4	2	5	3	3
14	4	4	2	3	3
15	3	3	3	4	4
16	3	2	5	3	4
17	2	3	5	3	3
18	3	2	5	3	3
19	3	3	4	3	3
20	3	2	4	3	3
21	3	2	4	2	3
22	3	3	3	3	4
23	4	2	3	2	2
24	4	4	5	4	3
25	4	4	4	4	3
26	4	4	5	4	4
27	3	3	5	4	4
28	4	5	5	4	4
29	4	5	5	5	4
30	2	4	5	4	4
31	3	4	5	4	3
32	2	3	5	4	3
33	4	4	5	4	4
34	3	4	5	3	4
35	3	3	2	4	2
36	4	4	5	4	4
37	5	5	5	5	5
38	4	4	5	5	4
39	5	4	3	5	4
40	5	4	5	5	4

Table A11. Post-test demographic data for participants 1-5

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Question 1					
Male or Female	M	F	F	M	M
< 50 Years Old	N	N	N	N	N
Married or Single	M	M	M	M	Y
Have Children	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
College Degree	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Graduate Degree	N	N	Y	N	N
Believer <5 Years	N	N	N	N	N
Member <5 Years	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Attend Group/Class	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Serve in Ministry	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Question 2	55	40		41	29
Question 3	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Question 4					
Worship Service		2		3	
Sunday Message		1		4	
Small Groups		4		2	
Serving in Ministry		3		1	



Table A12. Post-test demographic data for participants 6-10

	Participant 6	Participant 7	Participant 8	Participant 9	Participant 10
Question 1					
Male or Female	M	F	M	M	M
< 50 Years Old	N	N	N	N	Y
Married or Single	M	M	M	M	M
Have Children	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
College Degree	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Graduate Degree	N	Y	Y	Y	y
Believer <5 Years	N	N	N	N	N
Member <5 Years	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Attend Group/Class	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Serve in Ministry	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Question 2	55	18	20	20	34
Question 3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Question 4					
Worship Service	2	3	4	3	4
Sunday Message	1	2	2	1	3
Small Groups	3	1	3	2	1
Serving in Ministry	4	4	1	4	2

Table A13. Post-test demographic data for participants 11-15

	Participant 11	Participant 12	Participant 13	Participant 14	Participant 15
Question 1					
Male or Female	M	M	F	M	F
< 50 Years Old	N	N	N	N	N
Married or Single	M	S	M	M	Y
Have Children	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
College Degree	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Graduate Degree	N	N	Y	Y	N
Believer <5 Years	N	N	N	N	N
Member <5 Years	Y	N	N	N	Y
Attend Group/Class	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Serve in Ministry	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Question 2	55	50	51	40	38
Question 3	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Question 4					
Worship Service	3	4	4		4
Sunday Message	1	3	3		1
Small Groups	2	1	2		2
Serving in Ministry	4	2	1		3

Table A14. Post-test demographic data for participants 16-19

	Participant 16	Participant 17	Participant 18	Participant 19
Question 1				
Male or Female	M	M	F	M
< 50 Years Old	N	N	N	N
Married or Single	M	M	M	M
Have Children	Y	Y	Y	Y
College Degree	Y	Y	Y	N
Graduate Degree	N	N	N	N
Believer <5 Years	N	N	N	N
Member <5 Years	Y	Y	Y	Y
Attend Group/Class	N	N	Y	Y
Serve in Ministry	Y	Y	Y	N
Question 2	55	58	50	52
Question 3	Y	Y	Y	Y
Question 4				
Worship Service	4	3	4	2
Sunday Message	1	2	3	1
Small Groups	2	4	1	3
Serving in Ministry	3	1	2	4

Table A15. Post-test responses for participants 1-7

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7
Q#							
7	5	5	5	5	4	4	5
8	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
9	4	5	3	5	4	5	5
10	5	5	4	5	4	5	5
11	5	4	3	5	4	4	5
12	4	4	3	3	5	5	2
13	4	4	5	5	4	4	4
14	4	5	2	5	4	3	2
15	4	3	4	4	4	2	3
16	4	3	5	5	3	3	5
17	5	3	3	4	4	2	5
18	3	3	4	5	4	3	4
19	3	3	4	5	3	3	4
20	5	4	4	3	4	3	5
21	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
22	5	5	5	4	4	3	3
23	5	4	2	3	3	4	4
24	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
25	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
26	4	3	4	5	4	4	5
27	4	3	4	5	3	4	5
28	5	4	4	5	4	3	5
29	5	4	3	3	2	5	5
30	5	3	3	4	4	4	3
31	5	4	4	4	4	2	3
32	5	3	3	3	4	2	5
33	5	4	3	4	4	2	4
34	5	5	3	4	4	2	4
35	3	3	5	3	3	2	2
36	3	5	5	4	4	4	5
37	5	5	4	5	5	4	5
38	5	4	3	5	5	5	4
39	5	5	4	4	4	5	5
40	4	4	4	5	5	5	5

Table A16. Post-test responses for participants 8-14

	Participant 8	Participant 9	Participant 10	Participant 11	Participant 12	Participant 13	Participant 14
Q#							
7	5	4	5	4	5	5	5
8	5	4	4	4	5	5	5
9	4	4	5	4	5	5	5
10	4	4	5	4	5	5	5
11	5	4	4	4	4	5	3
12	2	2	3	4	3	4	4
13	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
14	2	3	3	3	4	4	2
15	2	3	5	3	3	4	4
16	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
17	4	3	5	3	3	4	5
18	4	4	5	4	4	5	5
19	5	3	4	4	4	5	4
20	2	3	3	4	4	2	5
21	3	3	2	4	4	2	5
22	5	4	4	4	4	2	5
23	3	4	3	4	4	1	5
24	5	4	5	4	5	5	5
25	5	4	4	4	4	5	4
26	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
27	4	4	5	4	4	4	5
28	5	4	5	4	3	5	5
29	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
30	4	4	5	4	3	4	5
31	4	4	5	2	2	5	5
32	4	4	5	3	2	5	5
33	4	4	5	2	2	5	5
34	4	4	5	3	4	5	4
35	2	3	2	2	4	5	3
36	5	4	4	4	4	5	5
37	5	4	5	4	5	5	5
38	4	4	5	4	4	5	4
39	5	4	4	4	4	5	5
40	5	3	5	4	4	5	5

Table A17. Post-test responses for participants 15-19

	Participant 15	Participant 16	Participant 17	Participant 18	Participant 19
Q#					
7	5	5	5	5	4
8	5	5	5	4	5
9	5	4	5	5	4
10	5	4	5	5	4
11	4	4	5	5	4
12	3	3	3	4	4
13	4	2	5	3	4
14	3	4	4	4	4
15	3	4	4	3	4
16	4	4	4	4	4
17	4	4	5	4	3
18	4	3	5	4	4
19	3	3	4	3	4
20	4	3	4	3	4
21	4	2	4	2	4
22	4	4	4	4	4
23	4	3	4	3	3
24	4	5	5	5	4
25	4	4	5	4	4
26	4	4	5	5	4
27	3	4	5	4	4
28	4	4	5	5	5
29	4	4	5	5	4
30	2	4	5	4	3
31	3	4	5	5	3
32	2	3	5	4	3
33	3	4	5	5	4
34	4	4	5	4	4
35	3	3	2	4	3
36	4	5	5	4	4
37	5	5	5	5	5
38	4	4	5	5	4
39	5	4	2	5	5
40	5	4	5	5	4

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## ABSTRACT

### LEARNING TO LEAD: A CLASS TEACHING MEMBERS TO BE MINISTRY LEADERS AT CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH, CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020  
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The purpose of this project is to develop, teach, and evaluate a study of biblical church leadership as part of developing qualified ministry leaders at Crossroads Community Church in Carol Stream, Illinois. The curriculum was designed to develop ministry volunteers at the church to lead their ministries to thrive. The curriculum covers the purpose of the local church, the importance of character in those who lead, and the value of leading others well. Participants took a survey testing their knowledge and attitudes toward ministry leadership at the beginning and end of the class.

Chapter 1 introduces the ministry context, rationale, purpose, goals, research methodology, definitions, and delimitations of the project. Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological basis for ministry training. Three Scripture passages are examined in making this case: Exodus 18:13-27; Acts 20:17-35; and 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Chapter 3 addresses the historical and practical issues related to training leaders within the local church setting. Chapter 4 includes details of the development, implementation, and a short evaluation of the project curriculum. Chapter 5 concludes the project with a more detailed evaluation, suggestions for further development, and reflections.

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BA, Southwest Baptist University, 1987

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### MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Associate Pastor, New Life Church, Osceola, Indiana, 1988-1996

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