



DISCIPLESHIP 301

DEVELOPING YOUR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

THE SALVATION ARMY
DISCIPLESHIP BIBLE STUDIES



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All Scripture quotation from
The New International Version

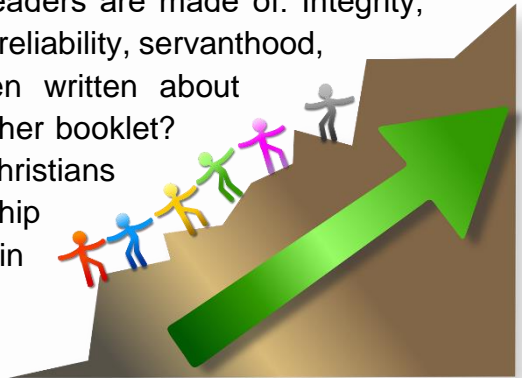
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1. THE SUBSTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

Introduction

By 'substance' we mean the 'stuff' Christian leaders are made of: Integrity, strength of character, passion, good work ethic, reliability, servanthood, generosity, and humility. So much has been written about leadership, you might be wondering: Why another booklet?

This brief course is designed to help young Christians (i.e. young in the faith) to uncover their leadership potential and to explore how it can be used in serving God and His Church.



Make Disciples

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus commanded His disciples (and by implication you and me) to **'Make disciples of all nations'**. A disciple is a student, one who is being instructed. The goal of every growing Christian should be to receive instruction from a more mature disciple while at the same time giving instruction by investing in a younger (newer) Christian so that we are continually learning and passing on what we have learned. We all remain students of the Word of God for the rest of our lives. The best leaders are those who remain teachable.

The Blessing of Mature Disciples

God wants us to become mature so that we can lead and train others. The Apostle Paul describes this process to Timothy when he writes: **The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others** (2 Timothy 2:2). The people Timothy is to train must be selected from those who are reliable, those who will pass on what they learn. This leadership characteristic – reliability – is much more important than social standing or educational level. Even people with little natural leadership ability can acquire good leadership skills by being trained and mentored by gracious leaders who are willing to invest time in them. Many of the limitations to our leadership exist only in our minds. Never underestimate what God can accomplish through you. Scripture is full of examples of God using the most unlikely people to achieve His purpose. Rather than listening to the negative thoughts the devil may place in your mind, listen to God's Word which says; **Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand** (Isaiah 41:10).



Godly Leaders Submit to God's Authority

With leadership comes recognition, and with recognition comes the temptation to have an inflated opinion of oneself. When God placed Adam and Eve in the garden, He gave them authority to rule over and look after the rest of His creation. However: He also gave them one tree from which they were not permitted to eat. This was to impress upon them that although were to have authority over creation they were also under God's authority. Nehemiah serves as an excellent example of a man who possessed tremendous natural aptitude for leadership yet remained humble and dependent on God (Nehemiah 1:10). God used Nehemiah in the near impossible task – humanly speaking – of rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem in just six weeks.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a disciple?

2. What can mature disciples do to help younger Christians reach their leadership potential?

3. What kind of people did Paul instruct Timothy to equip?

4. Think of a leader (Christians or secular) who you respect and would happily follow. What characteristics in him or her do you admire? List as many as possible.

2. THE TIMOTHY / TITUS QUALIFICATIONS – PART 1

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9

If we apply the principles in these verses to ourselves, we will become effective leaders in the Church. God requires high levels of integrity, commitment, and accountability from Christians leaders. This does not mean leaders must be perfect, but they must be committed – by God's grace - to living holy lives. There is some repetition in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus so we will focus on the shorter of these two passages.

Titus 1:6-9

An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

The Leaders God Uses

Paul didn't say: "Find the cleverest, best-looking, or most gifted people." Rather, he instructed Titus to choose leaders with good character. He was to take this list of character traits, find those who best fit the description, and then use the list as a **training guide** to disciple them and equip them for leadership. None of us fits all the criteria perfectly but we can shape our lives around them, making the



pursuit of these characteristics our goal. I would never have become a Salvation Army officer (or local officer, or cell-group leader, or Sunday School teacher, etc.) if I had to measure up perfectly against this list. But am I genuine and passionate in my desire to be like Jesus? Yes, I believe so. And do I see progress in my life as I look back over many years? Yes, I certainly hope so. I should also add that these characteristics should be evident in every Christian - not only those called to leadership. So, let's examine Paul's list one by one.

An elder must be blameless

What does it mean to be blameless? The translators of our English Bibles have a problem in that there isn't one perfect word, in English, that fully carries the intended meaning of the word Paul used (he wrote in Greek).

- The NIV says an elder must be **blameless**
- The ESV says he must be **above reproach**
- The NASB translates it as **beyond reproach**
- The NLT says: An elder must **live a blameless life**.

What they are all getting at is that an elder must have good moral character. Nobody should be able to point a finger at him or her and say: 'Look at the sinful way he is living, or the hurtful things she says'. Of course, the fact that people have no reason to criticize might not stop them, but a leader's life should be such that the one pointing a finger will end up feeling ashamed for criticizing unfairly.

Faithful to his wife



Some of the older translations say: "The husband of one wife". Some have suggested, based on this verse, that divorcees cannot be spiritual leaders, but it is more likely that Paul is emphasising the need to not sleep around or not have more than one wife at one time. The NIV words it "Faithful to his wife". I don't plan to get into the debate about whether church leaders may only be male. For our purpose, we

will assume that Paul used the word man in the generic sense of mankind, although in his day leadership was dominated by men. For an elder to be faithful to his wife simply means that he (or she) must be a devoted spouse. Of course, this doesn't mean that only married people can be leaders, but where an elder is married, he (or she) must be a faithful, loyal, spouse.

His children must believe

The children of an elder in the church must 'believe and not be open to the charge of being wild or disobedient'. What does the Bible mean when it says 'his children must believe'. Could it really be that people whose children are not believers (Christians) need not apply for leadership in the church? Are they automatically disqualified? If that is the case, then I know many 'illegitimate' pastors. Keep in mind that only God can save our children. We are responsible to lovingly teach them the Gospel and to do all

we can to bring them to faith in Jesus, but ultimately it is God who saves. If we took this to its logical conclusion, it would mean that I cannot be a leader unless and until my children are all saved. Now, none of us was born a Christian. Nor were our kids. Let's say you had a teenage daughter who is not a believer, but at the age of 17 she was wonderfully converted and her life is gloriously transformed. Would that mean that while she was unsaved at age 16 you could not be a leader, but now that she is born again at age 17, you can? Surely, this cannot be what Paul had in mind.



The word translated 'believe' in this verse can mean believe, but it can also mean 'faithful'. The Contemporary English Bible (CEB) translates verse 6: 'Elders should be without fault. They should be faithful to their spouse, **and have faithful children who can't be accused of self-indulgence or rebelliousness**'. I am aware of the danger of looking for a translation that says what I want it to say, but I do think the CEB captures the meaning better than most in this case. For children to be faithful does not mean they have to be born again, rather, it implies children who are, at least to some extent, directed by and obedient to their parents.

Of course, we all want our children to be saved and to be well-behaved, model church members. Who wouldn't want that? But the truth is that, in this fallen world, with all its temptations and brokenness, that just isn't the experience of every Christian leader. So, although the ideal might be to appoint an elder whose children are all sweet 'angels' filling the front row in church every Sunday, more realistically I think we are to look for leaders who do their best to teach and train their children well, who lovingly discipline them when necessary, and who set a good example for them to follow. An elder should read the Bible to his children. He should pray with them and for them, showing them how to get to know God better. As we all know, there are no perfect parents and there are no perfect



children, but we still need good, godly leaders to guide our churches.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What would happen to the church if only perfect people were permitted to lead it?

2. Explain what you think the Bible means when it says 'elders must be blameless'.

3. Why is it important for a Christian leader to be faithful to his (or her) spouse?

4. How can leaders do their best to guide their children into a genuine relationship with Jesus?



3. THE TIMOTHY / TITUS QUALIFICATIONS – PART 2

Let's go back to Titus 1, just verses 7—9.

Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless - not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Paul starts with the negative: A spiritual leader must...

Not be overbearing

An overbearing leader is a dictator, a bully, one who dominates the decision-making, not listening well to others, not taking their opinions into account. The overbearing leader is a manipulator who expects to always have his own way. I have always held that one of the most important characteristics of a good Christian leader is humility.

Not quick-tempered

The best spiritual leaders are patient. They respect and value the input of those they lead. The word used here for quick-tempered refers, not to having an occasional outburst of anger, but to the person who has a simmering temper. When a pot of water simmers on the stove it doesn't take much extra heat to make it boil over. Someone who carries anger, bitterness or resentment just under the surface will flare up quickly. Such a person is too volatile to be an effective spiritual leader.



Not given to drunkenness

In The Salvation Army, of course, we take this one step further. As a covenant-people we have voluntarily undertaken to not drink alcohol at all. It stands to reason then that we'd expect the same from our leaders. It is certainly possible, for Christians who have not made a commitment to avoid alcohol, to drink a glass of wine without sinning, but in our view avoiding alcohol completely is the best and safest option.

Not violent

You can follow Paul's train of thought as he mentions these criteria. Very often a person who gets drunk also becomes violent. Such behaviour cannot be accepted from one who wants to lead God's people. According to William Barclay the word used here for violent extends to violence with words. Leaders in the church need to have a calm, gentleness about them. They cannot scream and shout at the people they are trying to lead.

Not pursuing dishonest gain

We might be surprised that Paul felt it necessary to include this one. Surely it's obvious that people who steal cannot be spiritual leaders. It is, but you might be surprised how often a blind eye is turned when someone in leadership uses their position to enrich themselves.

Paul then flips the coin and mentions some positive character traits of an elder.



He must be hospitable

For some people hospitality comes naturally. They love to open their home, both to friends and strangers. In the family of the church, where we mostly see each other for only a few hours a week, this ability to be hospitable, warm, friendly, and welcoming is very valuable. The best place to get to know someone is round the dinner table.

He must love what is good

That's a rather broad statement, isn't it? Some translations say he must 'be a lover of goodness'. I am reminded of Philippians 4:8, where Paul writes: **Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.**

Self-controlled

Some translations use the term sober-minded, meaning, able to think clearly and wisely. This is so important for a leader. Paul certainly thought so, he used this word no less than 10 times in his short, pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus. Listen to what Warren Wiersbe says about the term sober-minded in his commentary on this

passage: “It does not mean he has no sense of humour, or that he is always solemn and somber. Rather it suggests that he knows the value of things and does not cheapen the ministry or the Gospel message by foolish behaviour”.

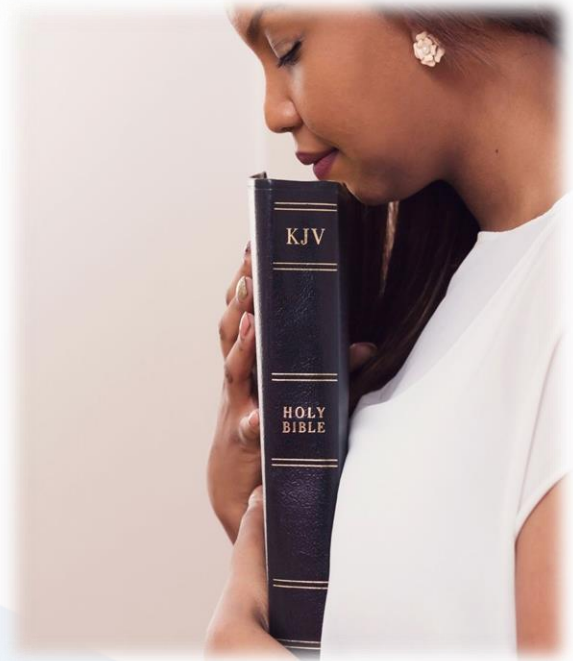
Upright, holy, and disciplined

These three are grouped together because they are related. A leader in the church must be:

- Upright - right towards other people
- Holy - right towards God
- Disciplined - right towards himself.

He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message

A spiritual leader must hold firmly to the trustworthy message. This means he must have a good grasp of God’s Word for himself. When he explains the Bible to people he must do so with reasonable confidence. A pastor who is not clear in his understanding of the Good News will not be able to put it across with suitable conviction. It also means that the leader will stick to God’s Word, instead of being side-tracked by the latest fads and gimmicks going around in church circles.



As he has been taught

This implies that the leader has been under the teaching and guidance of someone else. A pastor doesn’t necessarily have to go to Bible College, although it is certainly helpful, but he does need to be taught and disciplined by someone else. There are far too many self-appointed bishops, prophets, and pastors these days. Every spiritual leader must function under the leadership and guidance of other men and women of God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you spent time with an overbearing person? Describe what it would be like to follow the leadership of a ‘bully’.

2. Write a sentence or two about the link between drunkenness and violence.

3. Does hospitality come to you easily? Discuss what you can do to be more hospitable.

4. Why do you think did Paul use the term self-controlled or sober-minded so many times in his letters to Timothy and Titus?

5. Why is it essential for Christian leaders and pastors to be accountable to, and under the authority of, other senior leaders?

BLAMELESS, NOT OVERBEARING, NOT QUICK-TEMPERED, NOT GIVEN TO DRUNKENNESS, NOT VIOLENT, NOT PURSUING DISHONEST GAIN. HOSPITABLE, LOVES WHAT IS GOOD, SELF-CONTROLLED, UPRIGHT, HOLY AND DISCIPLINED.

4. LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP

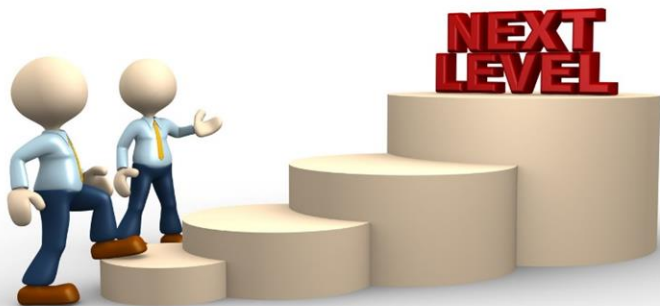
The need for leaders

In Matthew 9: 37-38 Jesus says: **The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore to send out workers into his harvest field.** Jesus was referring to the enormous need for workers to bring in a harvest of souls for His Kingdom. This cannot happen without good leadership. Has God chosen YOU to lead others to Christ and then to teach them to lead others?

As leaders develop, they go through various phases. Many Christians never move beyond the first or second phase of leadership, either because they have not been taught or they have become comfortable where they are and resisted change. Without followers no one can call himself a leader. No title or academic qualification can make one a leader. Leadership always involves followers.

FOUR LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP

- Leadership in its most basic form happens when people follow because they **have no choice**. This is often true in the work environment where people follow the instructions of the boss because that is the structure of the organisation, it's what they are paid to do. This type of leadership is imposed on people whether they like it or not.
- To progress beyond this level of leadership, where people follow because they are obliged to, the key word becomes **relationship**. Building good, healthy relationships is foundational to meaningful leadership. The leader must show genuine interest in those he leads. Most people can spot an insincere leader a mile away.
- If the relationship is healthy, people begin to follow because they want to. **Respect** is earned when leaders willingly and sacrificially invest in the lives of those they lead. The Apostle Peter wrote: **Not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock** (1 Peter 5:3).
- Respect is further strengthened when followers sense the leader's unselfish love and care for them. They then become involved with him in his vision and goals. In this – the highest level of leadership – people follow because of who the leader has become in their lives.



Servant Leadership

In the church leaders are servants of those they lead. Listen to the explanation Jesus gave his disciples: **Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”** (Mark 10:42-45).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Write down one key word or phrase from each of the 4 levels of leadership.

2. How did Isaiah respond to the call of God (Read Isaiah 6:8)?

3. What did Jesus promise to the disciples if they would follow Him (Matthew 4:19)?

4. How can leaders earn the respect of those they are leading?

5. At which of the 4 levels of leadership are you right now? What can you do to move to the next level?

5. HOW DO WE LEAD?

Christian leaders must lead...

In the power of the Spirit

In 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 we see Paul's example. He writes: **When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.**

People will follow leaders who have the blessing of the Holy Spirit on their ministry. To have God's anointing you will need to live close to Him. If you are a person of prayer, backed up by a holy life, people will respect you and follow you your leadership. A leader must be sensitive to what the Lord is saying. We don't depend on our own wisdom but on God's power. This does not mean that we won't make mistakes. But you can be sure that if you rely on your own strengths and abilities the mistakes will be worse and more plentiful.



Prayerfully

For most of us – including leaders - prayer is the most difficult spiritual discipline to develop. Prayer assumes that we live in dependence on God, and I fear many of us are less dependent than we might admit. It really does matter that church leaders are praying leaders. Colossians 4:2 begins: **Devote yourselves to prayer.** Being devoted means being wholehearted. It means to pray without ceasing (1

Thessalonians 5:17). We need more than a prayer list we need a prayer life! We must take prayer seriously and not casually.

Through God's Word

Jesus said: 'It is written, man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God' (Matthew 4:4). How can we impart what we don't know? A leader must live by the Word of God and pass that Word on to others to build them up in the faith. When Joshua took over from Moses as the leader of God's people, God gave him a simple but powerful command that would cause his success, if he obeyed it. Here it is: **"Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will**

be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:8-9). Too often we quote the promise of verse 9 without the condition of verse 8.

Through Caring for those who Respond to the Gospel

People won't listen to you until you have listened to them. Churches that implement consistent follow up and care systems are usually the most successful at keeping their members engaged in ministry. Dr. Joel Comiskey, in his book, *'The Cell Church Explosion,'* did a survey of cell churches around the world. He found that the two most dominant factors that affected church growth were prayer and follow up. The more effort we put into something, the more we get out of it. Take the time to build relationships. Invest yourself in people.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do we learn from Paul's leadership in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5?

2. Write your own paraphrase of Psalm 1: 1-3.

3. What, do you think, are the benefits of meeting together in cell groups or home Bible study groups?

4. What condition did God give to Joshua before the promise of success would be achieved? (Joshua 1:8)

6. SOME FINAL LEADERSHIP TIPS

Spiritual leadership is different from secular leadership in that spiritual leaders draw wisdom and strength from beyond themselves. They don't rely on their own abilities or charisma but stand confident in the power of the Holy Spirit. Here are 5 final tips (or traits) that you may find helpful.

1. Spiritual leaders let others lead

Great spiritual leaders don't do all the work. In fact, part of their work is identifying and training other leaders who can carry some of the load. It's a bit counterintuitive in our competitive "prove yourself" world. But successful spiritual leaders give the ball to others, especially those who are trustworthy or have displayed a level of competence and maturity. Good leaders delight in the success of others and cheer them on enthusiastically.

2. Spiritual leaders rely on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit

Far from boasting about their own prowess or influence, great spiritual leaders rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. The only charisma coming from such leaders is the charismatic work of the third person in the Trinity. In a very tangible way, spiritual leaders understand they can do nothing apart from Christ. All their work is 'hay and stubble' (meaning of no eternal value) unless given entirely to God for God's glory.

3. Spiritual leaders say, "I could be wrong."

No one likes a person who is always showing off his or her knowledge. Great leaders are followed not because of what they know but because they're humble enough to say, "I could be wrong." Of course, saying this isn't something you want to do all the time, as people may wonder whether you know anything at all, and as leaders, you should know some stuff. But humility is far from a weakness. In fact, according to Scripture, God opposes the proud but exalts and gives favour to the humble.

4. Spiritual leaders give themselves and others permission to fail

It's been said that *faith* is spelled R-I-S-K. Risk is right for men and women who trust in a big God who knows the beginning from the end. Part of taking risks is understanding that failure is a possibility. Great spiritual leaders give permission to themselves and others to fail. They're not looking for failure, of course, but they understand that risk may produce it, and they're ok with that. Just a caution when taking a risk in faith. It is only real faith if it is based on God's Word, God's promises. Taking unnecessary risks without first hearing from God is not faith but presumption.

5. Spiritual leaders deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Jesus

Jesus said, **“If you want to be my disciples, you must deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow me”** (Matthew 16:24). Jesus was not referring to some burden, problem, or sickness we must bear, but to our need to be totally committed to Him. Spiritual leaders look to Jesus for guidance in all their activities. They know following him means unfollowing themselves, not leaning on their own understanding. They lay their lives down for the good of others, and through prayer and reading the Bible, they stay in touch with their Heavenly Father. Being a disciple of Jesus is at the center of a spiritual leader's identity. They don't rely on their own abilities. They don't take pride in their accomplishments. They trust in the finished work of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In what way is Christian leadership different from ordinary secular leadership?

2. Why don't Christian leaders just knuckle down and do all the work themselves?

3. In what way would admitting you could be wrong encourage others to follow you?

4. What does it mean to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus?
