

The Character Of A Leader

Introduction. The Bible is a unique book in that, within its pages, God makes complete provision for every spiritual need of man (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). The Bible is a worship manual, a work manual, and a relationship manual.

The Bible is also a leadership manual. Since men need spiritual leadership, God has made provision for them (such as evangelists, pastors, and teachers in Ephesians 4:1). God's provision for this leadership includes instruction on how to be a leader among His people.

The first point about leadership that we have to understand is that a congregation seldom rises above its leaders. A congregation will go only so far as its leaders take it. As a leader, you cannot expect people to do something you are unwilling to do yourself. More importantly, as a leader, you cannot teach people to be something that you refuse to be yourself. This is why character is so important in a leader.

There are some traits of character that we need to develop within ourselves in order to be a good leader. Some are obvious and often discussed. For instance, a leader must be a man of truth, and must have deep faith and conviction; but these alone do not make one a good leader. We will discuss some characteristics that are a little less obvious but every bit as important.

I. ***A Leader Genuinely Cares***

- A. After hearing that Jerusalem was still in distress, Nehemiah demonstrated how deeply this affected him (Nehemiah 1:1-4).
- B. A good leader today is going to care:
 - 1. When people out of Christ are lost.
 - 2. When some Christians are unfaithful or caught up in wickedness.
 - 3. When some are sick or are otherwise physically burdened.
 - 4. When the worship and work of the church is compromised.
 - a) Digression is so easy; brethren need to be informed of proper actions and roles.
 - b) Also, our worship and work needs to be done enthusiastically but appropriately.
 - 5. When the physical property needs maintenance.
 - a) People think it is unnecessary, but this was Nehemiah's great concern.
 - b) Why? Because the damage reflected on the glory of God.

II. ***A Leader Loves The Word Of God***

- A. Joshua was directed by God to the word (Joshua 1:8). David wrote extensively about his love for God's word (Psalm 1:1-2; 19:7-11).

- B. A good leader today is going to be one who, like David, spends time with the word of God (1 Timothy 4:13, 16; 2 Timothy 2:15) and is led by it (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18).

III. **A Leader Is Obedient**

- A. By faith, great men like Noah (Genesis 6:8-9, 22) and Abraham (Genesis 12:1-5) obeyed God and were rewarded for their loyalty to God (Hebrews 11:13-16)
- B. A good leader today cannot lead others to obey unless he demonstrates obedience in his own life and in the life of his family (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9).

IV. **A Leader Prays To God**

- A. In Nehemiah 1:5-11, Nehemiah laid the deep burden of his heart before the Lord. The prayer reflected deep love for God, and it put man in his rightful place.
- B. A good leader today is going to recognize the need to lay his own burdens before the Lord (1 Peter 5:7; cf. Acts 20:28; 2 Corinthians 11:28).

V. **A Leader Acknowledges His Own Sins**

- A. Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:6) and David (Psalm 32:1-5) were both tender-hearted and willing to confess sin.
- B. This demonstrates that one does not have to be sinlessly perfect to be a good leader ("good behavior," 1 Timothy 3:2; "blameless," Titus 1:7).
- C. A good leader humbly acknowledges his sin and then demonstrates the proper character by seeking God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of those he has wronged.

VI. **A Leader Has A Servant's Mentality**

- A. Jesus was a willing servant both in physical needs (John 13:1-15) and spiritual needs (Matthew 20:20-28).
- B. Any preacher, elder, deacon, or teacher who does not first view himself as a servant to God and his brethren is not fit to be a leader. He is not to "lord" over the flock of God (1 Peter 5:3).

VII. **A Leader Has A Sensitive Spirit**

- A. Jesus had a caring and compassionate heart, and was interested in physical needs (Mark 8:1-3) and spiritual needs (Matthew 9:36-38).
- B. There is a tendency in leaders to expect too much out of people. Because they are strongly motivated and deeply committed they expect others to be also when, in reality, that is not the case.

C. People who are spiritually weaker need stronger motivation and deeper commitment, but in order to lead them to spiritual maturity, leaders cannot run rough-shod over them. They must be sensitive to the spiritual needs of the weaker and do their best to meet them.

Conclusion. Many other important characteristics could and perhaps need to be mentioned. For instance, a good leader is approachable (John 10:3-5) and reasonable (James 3:17). But these give you an idea of the type of traits that are present in a good leader. They are traits that every faithful Christian needs to develop and I hope are developing in you. We need more people with these wonderful traits.