

# Why Some Leaders Excel

**Introduction.** It is not overstating the case to say that leadership makes or breaks a congregation. We know that it takes men who are qualified to be elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9), and we know their tasks (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 6:1-4), but what is the measure of a great leader?

The Bible gives us examples of a wide array of leaders, and when we begin looking closely at those who excelled in their leadership an unmistakable pattern appears -- we see key traits that are always present when one is effective.

Why do some people excel at leading others? How is it that some leaders seem to be more able to influence others for good and to accomplish good? The Bible shows very clearly why some leaders excel and I want to examine with you four of those reasons.

## I. ***Wholeheartedness***

- A. Hezekiah became king of Judah and demonstrated his great leadership among God's people by bringing about many needed reforms (2 Chronicles 31:20-21).
- B. We see nothing less in the example of Jesus. He was zealous for purity in the house of God (John 2:17), and for the utmost devotion in His servants (Mark 12:29-30).
- C. Do we find this spirit in the age in which we live? Are we often encouraged to wholeheartedness? Hardly.
  1. We hear people in the workplace telling us, "Take it easy," "Don't work too hard," or "Don't overdo it," and that is the way a lot of people live.
  2. The danger in this is that this philosophy can be and often is picked up by leaders in churches. When it is, mediocrity or failure is the result.
  3. Instead, we need to be encouraging one another to "give all you have got" and "do the best you can" (Philippians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1).
- D. God is looking for and will be satisfied with nothing less than wholehearted commitment from you and me (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Luke 14:23; Colossians 3:23).
- E. A leader has to consider that he is not only building for the present but the future too. If his heart is lukewarm, what will the future hold for God's people?

## II. **Singlemindedness**

- A. Jesus is a good example of singlemindedness (Mark 10:32-34; Luke 9:51), as well as Paul (Philippians 3:13-14). It is significant to note that he said, "I press", not "float", "glide", "slip", or "drift".
- B. The Bible gives at least three reasons for singlemindedness.
  - 1. Everything in this world is temporal and transient (2 Peter 3:10).
  - 2. Life is too short to be wasted (James 4:14).
  - 3. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58).
- C. A man can destroy his life in one of three ways:
  - 1. Give in to the lazy and slothful nature and do nothing.
  - 2. Give yourself to a goal, work hard, and discover you gave yourself to the wrong goal.
  - 3. Dabble in everything and never really do anything.
- D. A crown of life awaited Paul because he was singleminded in his devotion to the Lord and His cause (2 Timothy 4:6-8). A good leader shares the same laser-sharp focus (Joshua 1:7; 2 Timothy 2:4).

## III. **A Mind Set On Excellence**

- A. We serve a God of excellence.
  - 1. His name is excellent (Psalm 8:1).
  - 2. His greatness is excellent (Psalm 150:2).
- B. We are appalled sometimes at the lack of excellence we see around us, but this was not the spirit of our Lord (Mark 7:37). His life is a testimony to the fact that anything worth doing is worth doing right. We need that mind in us (cf. Philippians 2:5).
- C. Everything we do should be done in the name of the Lord and everything we do reflects upon that name in one way or another (Colossians 3:17). We need to make certain that what we do reflects well and glorifies that name (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12)!

## IV. **Initiative**

- A. Initiative is "the action of taking the first step or move; taking responsibility for beginning or originating; the ability to think or act without being urged."
  - 1. It is obvious that initiative is a basic quality of leadership (Acts 15:22-23).
  - 2. Someone must take the first step or nothing will ever get done (cf. Genesis 42:1-2).
- B. The scriptures have some good examples of people who took the initiative in accomplishing God's purposes.
  - 1. David (1 Samuel 17:32).
  - 2. Isaiah (Isaiah 6:8).

- C. A leader must exercise initiative in several ways.
  - 1. Serving (Acts 28:2).
  - 2. Reconciliation (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15).
  - 3. Seeking knowledge (Proverbs 20:5).
- D. A leader who excels is a leader who thinks in terms of what can be done rather than what cannot. He thinks of obstacles as stepping stones rather than barriers. In the end, one must remember you cannot pull people uphill who do not want to go; you can only point up.

**Conclusion.** Too many believe that leadership is merely the management of conflict. It is not. Leadership produces results which positively impact a congregation, but leaders who excel are not men who were just born leaders. They are men who have taken their natural abilities and developed them as much as possible. We can have effective leaders today if we will develop these characteristics in our lives.