

SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP IN MINISTRY

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible is filled with stories of men and women who were successful leaders. Men like Joseph, who became second in command over the greatest nation of his day - Egypt. Men like Moses who led God's people as they were delivered from bondage in Egypt, and Joshua who led Israel into the promised land and oversaw a military campaign while resulted in the conquest of Canaan. Deborah, the prophetess of Judges chapter 4, defeated Jabin, King of Canaan and delivered Israel from oppression. Gideon was a successful leader who led a small army which God reduced from thirty two thousand men to only three hundred. They defeated the enormous Midianite army. David was a successful leader who was chosen by God and anointed to be King of Israel in I Samuel 16:13 while he was still very young. Nehemiah was a successful leader who brought the Israelites back to Jerusalem out of captivity and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem in only six months. Paul the apostle was a successful leader, and was used by the Lord to evangelize the Gentile world and start countless churches.

There is no simple trick or secret that allows someone to be a successful leader, but there is an important principle given in the Bible which applies to anyone who would see success, or would seek to see their purpose be successful. It is found in Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:1-3.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

God promised Joshua that his success depended upon his careful observance of the things written in God's word.

Psalm 1:1 ¶ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Psalm One, the "Preface Psalm," promises that the man who will delight in God's law, and meditate therein day and night will be prosperous in whatever he does.

Who did God call to be leaders? What qualities was God looking for in the people who received His most important assignments? God calls those who will obey Him. He calls those who will be faithful to do the job He has for them. God calls people whose heart is right towards God, and who are willing to endure great hardship for His name. God calls people who walk with Him and love Him. He calls the inexperienced, the young, the unimportant, and the weak. He calls those who are willing to be called.

What did God do to prepare people to be successful leaders? He taught them and used experiences in their life to shape them into a useful vessel. He gave them promises that they could depend upon.

What did these people do that made them successful? What is necessary in order for a man to be successful? First, a man must be dedicated (submitted): he must be someone who is willing to be used by the Lord. He must be decided – a man who wants God to use Him and who has forsaken anything that would stand in the way. He must be a man who depends upon God, trusting God to equip him lead him, train him, and use him.

What would have happened if the successful leaders in the Bible had not been available to God and successful in His service? Without Joseph, Jacob's family would have starved in the famine as would many of the Egyptians. Without Moses, Israel would have remained in bondage in Egypt. Without David, Goliath would have been triumphant, and Israel would have been deprived of its first good king. Without Nehemiah, the walls of Jerusalem would have remained a ruin. Without Paul, the Gentile world would not have been evangelized, and you and I would probably have never heard the gospel.

Just as in Bible times, there is a great need for successful leaders today. We need to get a vision and have a desire to be a successful leader for God. The world is more wicked than ever. It is in need of men and women who will stand with God. There are more lost people in the world than ever before. They are entering hell at an alarming rate, probably about one hundred and fifty souls every minute. In 2012, the population of the world exceeded seven billion. And yet, less than one third of that population claims to be Christian, and over half of those are Catholics who have little or no knowledge of the true gospel. There are over one and a half billion Muslims in the world, over one billion Hindus, and half a billion Buddhists, all without Christ.

And those people in the world who are saved need to be led, taught, prayed for, preached to, and worked with. Even one individual soul, however young or old, is worth caring for and reaching for Christ. Successful leaders are greatly needed today.

Consider the definitions of the three most important words in this study:

Qualities – these are the character traits which we obtain or possess. They are things about us such as what we do, how we do it, where we go, how we behave, and who we are. They are the principles that we have chosen to guide us through life. They should come from, and always agree with, the Bible.

Godly character can be obtained and chosen. Where gifts are only available to those to whom God has given them, character is available to everyone. For example, you can choose to learn and obey the Bible, but your overall intelligence comes from the Lord. You can choose to take care of your appearance and care for your clothing and grooming, but your facial features come from God. You can choose to work hard, study, be organized, spend time in prayer, and know your Bible, but your ability to think or speak are gifts God has given you.

To be a successful leader, you must take the gifts that God has given you, accept the limitations that may need to be overcome, and make the necessary effort to improve yourself to the best of your ability in order to be the best leader that you can be for God.

Success – this is simply finding God’s will for your life and pursuing it to the best of your ability. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might (Eccl 9:10). Success is achieving the goals God has given to you, or those that He will give to you later. It is overcoming the obstacles, through God’s power, that stand in your way.

Unlike the world, the believer’s view of success is defined by God in His word. It is a view which considers eternity, and which does not depend on this world or its idea of success. We cannot truly have success unless God calls what we do a success. It must be success in God’s eyes, not merely in ours.

Success requires knowing the goal that God has given us, and then persistently seeking that goal until it is achieved by God’s grace and power. It is a lifelong endeavor.

Leader – this is someone who influences others to accomplish a task or goal in a desired manner. In the Bible, each success was the result of the efforts of a leader (like Joseph, Nehemiah, Paul, etc.). Leaders are men and women who are given authority, who understand the goal, and who then influence others in a way which overcomes obstacles and achieves that goal.

The purpose of this book is to motivate each of us to become a successful leader for God. We should understand what it means to be a successful leader, understand what the Bible says about how to become a successful leader, and personally apply whatever is necessary in order to become the leader God wants us to be.

CHAPTER 1 – What is Successful Leadership?

The Bible is filled with good examples of success and failure, and of successful leaders. It tells the life story of men and women who succeeded or failed. It promises success to those who obey God, and it promises failure to those who do not.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen 6:8). He did according unto all the LORD commanded him (Gen 7:5). He and his family were spared from the flood, as were the animals God used to replenish the earth.

Abraham obeyed God and led his family from their homeland and kinfolk (Gen 12:1,4). He then obeyed God when commanded to offer Isaac on an altar (Gen 22). Because of his obedience, God promised to bless him, and all nations of the earth through him. He became the father of Israel, and the lineage of Christ.

Joseph believed the revelation he received from the LORD, and told his family what he had dreamed (Gen 37:5). He was hated for it by them, but went on to become the second in command in Egypt. Joseph spared his family, and the Egyptians, from death by starvation.

Moses obeyed the LORD and led Israel out of bondage in Egypt. He then took them through the wilderness. While Moses forfeited the luxury, power, and fame that Egypt had to offer him, he became the man whom God spoke to face to face.

Joshua had faith, and led Israel into the promised land. The military campaign that he oversaw resulted in the conquest of the inhabitants of the land. Just as God had said, Joshua took the whole land (Joshua 11:23).

Gideon defeated a huge Midianite army of over 100,000 with only 300 men (Judges 7:22). Samson, a man of faith, conquered the Philistines (Heb 11:32). Ruth, also a woman of faith became a member of the family when she gave birth to the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 1:5). David was a man after God's own heart and became the first great king of Israel (I Sam 13:14). Ezra and Nehemiah rebuilt the temple, and the wall. Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it (Ez 7:10).

There are many more success stories in the Bible. Those of the prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Those of the New Testament saints like Paul, Peter, Timothy, Titus, and Luke. Then, of course, there is the Lord Jesus Christ whose death on the cross gave victory over death to all who accept Him as Saviour.

Then also, the Bible records the life of men and women who failed. Lot was a failure because he chose the well watered plain (Gen 13:10) in spite of its closeness to Sodom and Gomorrah. He walked by sight, thinking mostly of himself. Because of his choice, he lost everything in life. His wife, his city, his possessions, and his future were destroyed. His daughters gave birth to the enemies of God named the Moabites and Ammonites (Gen 19:36).

Saul was also a failure. He disobeyed God one time too many and was rejected as king (I Sam 16:1). He rebelled against God and pursued David in an attempt to retain the throne (I Sam 18:29). Ultimately, he died with his sons in battle (I Sam 28:19). His life brought only heartache and trials for David and Israel.

Demas was a failure (II Tim 4:10). He loved this present world instead of the one to come. He had been a fellow laborer with Paul (Philemon 1:24). Diotrephes, a pastor, was a failure (III John 1:9). Judas Iscariot was the ultimate failure, having betrayed Christ for silver.

Sometimes, great men in the Bible experienced failure mixed with their success. Moses sinned and lost the privilege of seeing the promised land (Num 20:7-12). Samson died in captivity because he was deceived by Delilah. David sinned against God in betraying Uriah the Hittite, and the sword never departed from his house as a result (II Sam 12:10). Solomon built the temple, but later in life his heart was turned from the Lord by his wives (I Kings 11:9) and the kingdom was taken from his son Rehoboam and given to his servant Jeroboam. In fact, only a short time after Solomon's death, the land was invaded and most of the riches collected by Solomon were captured.

The question should be asked, Why were certain people in the Bible successful? In general, the answer is that they found and completed the task God gave them to do. They trusted God even though they faced all kinds of overwhelming opposition. They obeyed God, and lived according to His word. They did not succeed because they were admired by men (Saul was admired by men and he failed). They did not succeed because they were naturally strong, talented, capable, or intelligent (often they were weak). They were not successful because of their wealth or power (Joseph had neither, but became great in the eyes of Egypt). Success depends on God, not on man.

What is success? Success is finding and following God's will for your life. It is being obedient and holy, and being used by God to accomplish what He has given us to do. Success is being used by the Lord to the fullest, in complete agreement with His will.

What does success involve or require? It could require building something as it did for Noah, Solomon, Ezra, or Nehemiah. It could involve leading God's people as with Joshua, Moses, David, or Samuel. It could include fighting battles for God like Joshua, David, Gideon, or Samson. It may involve being an instrument of deliverance as with David, Esther, Gideon, or Ruth. It will always include tribulation, persecution, setbacks, loss, suffering, hardship, toil, grieving, rejection, and weariness.

When you succeed in finding and following God's will, you will see that it often brings about great results which have a great impact for God upon men. But, anything that is done in God's will is important, and whether it appears great or not, it is great in God's eyes. God desires to do great things for His glory, not for ours. He will use us greatly if we let Him, but we may never see the greatness of what we do for Him.

Ananias of Damascus is named for doing only one thing in the Bible. He prepared Saul (the apostle Paul) for his ministry (Acts 9:17). What looks small to us may be great in God's eyes. Sometimes God uses a number of people to do small things which add up to a great thing for Him. Gideon's army is an example of using small to achieve what is great.

In Jeremiah 33:3, the LORD said, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and might things." You will probably never know the greatness of your efforts for God until you see Him in glory one day.

CHAPTER 2 – Qualities of a Successful Leader

There are a number of important qualities that should be present in the life of a successful leader. These should be perfected so that we can be successful in the eyes of the Lord, and man. They are like the ingredients in a recipe for bread. If you do not have all of the necessary ingredients, the product is not going to be what it should be.

The seven main ingredients, qualities essential in the life of a successful leader are Perspective, Preparation, Principles, Perspiration, Persistence, Prayer, and Patience. Each is important and must not be left out.

The first of these qualities is perspective. These are things that we must know. That is, things that we need to perceive, see, or comprehend and understand in order to be a successful leader.

First we need to know the goal. If you do not know the goal – clearly understand what you are trying to accomplish – you cannot accomplish much of anything. As someone once said, if you do not have a target you will hit it every time.

God gave a specific goal to those he called. Noah had a goal of building an ark. In Genesis 6:14 God told Noah make the ark of Gopherwood. Moses was given the goal of delivering God's people. In Exodus 3:10 God said, "I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Joshua was given the goal of conquering the promised land. In Joshua 1:2-3 God said, "Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." Just as these men knew the goal, we must know the goal as well.

Second, we need to know the need, that is, the reason for the goal. God told Noah of the wickedness of the people and of the coming flood in Genesis chapter 6. God told Moses of the suffering of the people and the need for deliverance in Exodus chapter 3. Ministry is all about people. It often involves many things like building, printing, preparing, organizing, fixing, planning, etc. But, unless the focus is on people, it is not ministry which will be useful to God. It is easy to get confused and miss understand that working hard is enough, but unless you are affecting and changing the lives of individuals - one at a time - for the Lord, you are not ministering for God. Consider how Christ dealt with individuals as an example.

Third, you need to know God's will for your life. Ephesians 5:17 says, "Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." His will includes all areas of your life including family, money, where you live and serve, etc. His will is different for various times of our life, and we must continue to follow his will throughout our life.

Fourth, we need to know God's promises in His word, and know that they are sure. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:16, that without faith it is impossible to please him. All of the heroes of the faith in Hebrews chapter 11 obtained a good report because of their faith.

Fifth, we need to know the compassion of Christ and have that compassion upon people. Compassion is a burden for the suffering, and it makes a difference according to Jude 1:22. Compassion moved Christ, and it will move us. See Matthew 9:36 Matthew 14:14, Matthew 18:27, Mark 1:41, and Mark 6:34.

Sixth, we need to know our absolute dependence upon the Lord and his grace. Psalm 127:1 says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." In John 15:5 Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing."

Seventh, we need to know that we have forsaken ourselves and that we are absolutely in God's hands. It is like tossing a paper boat into the river. Once the boat is in the water the destiny of the boat is determined by the flow of the water. When we give ourselves to God, He controls where we go. Luke 14:26 and 27 says we must forsake our life in order to be a disciple. Luke 14:33 says we must forsake all that we have in order to be the disciple.

The second quality that is necessary in the life of a successful leader is preparation. There are a number of things we must do to get ready for service to God. If we are not prepared, we will not be able to succeed.

Preparation is the gathering and learning of knowledge, wisdom, and skill necessary to achieve the goal. Wisdom is something we choose to have. It is not just a gift from God. Proverbs 4:7 commands us to, "get wisdom." It is available to everyone. God promised openly that if any man would ask of God he would be given wisdom liberally (James 1:5).

Knowledge must be obtained through hard work, experience, and study. II Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." I Timothy 4:7 says, "exercise thyself rather unto godliness." Knowledge comes from God's word and is never opposed to God's word.

Preparation of the heart is essential. Ezra was called to be a "ready scribe" according to Ezra 7:6. Ezra had, "prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD and to do it." (Ezra 7:10). Preparation brings confidence in difficult times, and makes those times easier. David had slain a lion and a bear (I Samuel 17:36) and therefore was confident when he prepared to use his sling against a giant.

The time to prepare is before the crisis. Trials, and the busy times of the ministry leave little time to prepare once the work has begun. When you are busy in the work, it will be necessary to make many important decisions quickly each day. There will not be time to go back and learn how to do most things. God will guide you, but he expects you to be prepared.

The third quality needed in the life of a successful leader is having Principles. You must know, and decide to follow, honor, and live by God's standards as given in the Bible. Only when you walk (live, act, think) according to God's word, are you guaranteed to prosper and be blessed.

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth

in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

You must decide to be holy. Daniel purposed in his heart that he “would not . . .” in Daniel 1:8. Do not underestimate the work involved in being holy. Exercise yourself unto godliness as in I Timothy 4:7. Faith is not enough. You must add to your faith, virtue (II Peter 1:5).

There are two important areas that you must watch closely in your life. Both are resources that God has given you, or will give you. Neither should be wasted or abused. These resources are time and money. How you use them will tell the story of your life.

Be careful how you use your time. The flesh would have us to be lazy and careless about our time. It would have us sleep in, be late, leave early, relax often, and take it easy. Time is valuable. Use it for God’s work. Do the work first, then rest later. You will not succeed if you waste your time.

Be careful how you let money control you. Too many people get in debt and must then work to get back out of debt instead of working for God. Debt is dangerous. The Bible is full of guidance about money. Don’t be greedy for it. Don’t serve it like a master. Don’t make it a priority in your life.

The fourth quality you need is Perspiration. You must work hard in order to see success for God. Long, hard work and lots of it is necessary for success. Laziness is condemned in the Bible. Proverbs 12:24 says, “The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.” Proverbs 19:15 says, “Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.” We are commanded, “be not slothful” in Hebrews 6:12.

You must be decisive, but patient. When a decision needs to be made, don’t delay in making it unless there is good reason for delay. If you don’t know what to do, ask the LORD. If you do know, be sure it is God’s will.

Desire to do great things for God, even when they seem very difficult. Be willing to accept responsibility for a big job which takes much time and effort. Look for opportunity to do great things for God, but be willing to do whatever He asks of you.

Make yourself available to people. Give them your time: it is really God’s time. Be willing to sacrifice in order to serve people. If you forget someone’s birthday or anniversary, it may seem like a small thing to you, but it is not small to them. Sacrifice your time and energy to be organized so that you won’t forget. Details are very important, and without hard work you will overlook some of them.

Everyone is important to the LORD, and attention to each person and their individual needs is necessary. One missed appointment, failed promise, or overlooked opportunity can cost much. Be organized, even though it takes much effort. Don't make excuses for being sloppy.

You do not have to do all of the work and personally be involved in every little task. Do what God wants you to do, and give others responsibility as well. Don't be busy just to be busy. Focus on what is important. Give jobs to others and make sure they are done and done well.

Being organized is knowing where everything is, and knowing everything that is happening. Most disorganized people are simply too lazy to get organized. It is not that difficult to write things down on a list, and to read the list to be sure they are done. Don't make excuses for not being where you are supposed to be, for not being ready, for not being organized, or for not doing your best. Excuses are like elbows: everyone has a couple of them.

The fifth quality in a successful leader's life is Persistence. Keep trying; continue to work hard even when opposed, frustrated, or when you are not seeing immediate results. Galatians 6:9 says, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." II Timothy 2:3 command us to, "Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Take care of your health so that you can be persistent and give God your best. Bad health will stop you, even if you are very young. If you have common illnesses like allergies, find medicines that will control them. Exercise and eat right. Don't let your body control you and don't let your appetites weaken you so that you cannot serve God with your best. Watch your weight. Get enough rest, but not too much.

The sixth essential quality is prayer. Bring all of your needs, cares, and burdens before God's throne (see Hebrews 4:16). Without sufficient prayer, you will not be successful. Daniel prayed three times a day. Paul prayed daily, and made mention of many people and churches as he prayed. The Lord Jesus Christ prayed all night on more than one occasion. There are some things that cannot be done without prayer (Mark 9:29).

Are you praying enough? If you are lacking needs because you have never asked God to provide them, you need to pray more. If you are worrying about things instead of praying and telling God your cares, you need to pray and start trusting God to care for you. If you are failing in your situation, ask yourself if you have prayed and trusted God with it.

The seventh essential quality of a successful leader is Patience. We must wait for God to bring success and results. One of the hardest times to serve the Lord is when nothing seems to be happening, or when things may even seem to be going backwards. God's schedule is almost always much different from ours, and almost always moves more slowly than we would like. If we get ahead of God, we are going to get ourselves in trouble. Noah, for example, was not told to leave the ark until it was the right time. If he had left too early, he would have been stuck in the mud.

Patience requires endurance. Waiting for God to deliver you from trials is a Bible truth. James 5:11 says, “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

The seven qualities of a successful leader are these. Perspective - things you must know in order to succeed. Preparation - things you must do to be ready for the work. Principles - standards you must follow so that God can make you a success. Perspiration - working hard in order to succeed. Persistence - not quitting; enduring; continuing until reaping occurs. Prayer - making your needs and gratitude known to God; casting your cares upon Him. Patience - waiting and trusting God in times when fruit is not yet seen.

If you will endeavor to obtain these qualities, and to exercise them well, you will succeed for God. By understanding each of them, and examining your life to see what must be done to obtain these qualities, you will make yourself what you need to be for God to use you greatly.

CHAPTER 3 – Characteristics and Practices of a Successful Leader

Atilla, known as “Atilla the Hun,” was a leader of a group of nomad warriors who migrated into Europe around 400 A.D. and conquered a large amount of territory using military techniques such as mounted archery and javelin throwing. He wrote a number of comments on leadership, including the following:

"There is no quick way to develop leaders. Huns must learn throughout their lives—never ceasing as students, never being above gaining new insights or studying innovative procedures or methods—whatever the source."

"The quality of unyielding drive to accomplish assignments is a desirable and essential quality of leadership. The weak persist only when things go their way. The strong persist and pursue through discouragement, deception and even personal abandonment."

"Praise those who are simply good Huns. Their need for gratification tends to parallel their level of ambition."

"Always remember that worthy causes meet with the most resistance—even internal withholding of support and loyalty. If victory is easily gained, you must reconsider the worthiness of your ambitions."

"Every Hun has value—even if only to serve as a bad example."

"Without challenge, a Hun's potential is never realized."

While Atilla was not a godly man, the leadership ideas that he wrote have a basis in scriptural truth. Even when lost people apply godly principles, they produce good results (although those results are not of eternal value in the lives of unsaved people).

One biblical model of a leader is a shepherd leading sheep. We see that model in Psalm 23. A leader provides for the needs of those whom he leads. Psalm 23:1 - “I shall not want.” He exercises authority over those whom he leads. Psalm 23:2 - “He maketh me” He guides and directs those whom he leads. Psalm 23:2 - “He leadeth me.” He gives comfort and restoration to those who follow him. Psalm 23:3 - “He restoreth my soul.” He protects and gives confidence to his sheep. Psalm 23:4 - “I will fear no evil.” He leads in the presence of those sheep. – Psalm 23:4 - “Thou art with me.” And he delights in blessing those who follow him. Psalm 23:5 - “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.”

As we know, Psalm 23 is about our Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. But, it is also a picture of what a good pastor (shepherd) should be, and it demonstrates the most important characteristics of a scriptural leader.

As an officer in the U. S. Army, I was taught many leadership skills. A very good book about military leadership is, *Taking Command, The Art and Science of Military Leadership*” published in 1967. It lists a number of important character traits of a good military leader. As with Atilla, the source of these characteristics is not pure scripture, but they have distinct scriptural basis.

These are traits that should be present in the life of a military leader.

Bearing - Having proper appearance, posture, manner, behavior, acting properly, and instilling confidence through evidence of character and competence as seen in one’s appearance.

Courage – Joshua 1:6 Be strong and of a good courage – Not afraid of suffering, and not afraid of the consequences of being a leader.

Decisiveness – Ability and willingness to make leadership decisions quickly. Accepting responsibility for those decisions, and making them accurately.

Dependability – Being faithful. Always being there when you are needed. Being someone who can be counted upon to keep promises, act appropriately, and to be trustworthy. Someone who faithfully improves the situation. Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.

Endurance – 2 Tim 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Endurance is the personal quality of continuing in the face of hardship, difficulty and trial.

Enthusiasm – Dan 6:3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him. Enthusiasm is the display of zeal, excitement, active interest, zest, and even enjoyment.

Initiative – Doing something without having to be told to do it. Seeing what needs to be done and doing it. Being a self starter. Solving problems before others even know about them. Looking for something that needs to be done, and getting it done.

Integrity – Honesty; being someone that others can always trust to do right. Not having compromising or self-serving standards of behavior.

Judgment – Having the sense to do things right. Knowing when to act and when to wait. Knowing God’s will. Making decisions that solve problems instead of create them. Having knowledge and knowing what you know and what you do not know.

Justice – Acting to enforce right and wrong. Being willing to punish and willing to forgive. Not being afraid to denounce wrongdoing, even when it is not popular. Knowing what is fair, godly, moral, and right, and acting in the way that brings righteousness to pass.

Knowledge – Possession of accurate information about people, the task at hand, the word of

God, how to get things done, business matters, society, legal matters, etc. etc. Knowing where to go to find information that is needed. Having resources of knowledge available. Not being untrained or a novice.

Loyalty – Standing with subordinates and superiors when others attack them. Not taking sides for personal gain. Not criticizing, maligning, disparaging, mocking, or undercutting others. Not holding grudges. Honoring the trust that others have placed in you.

Tact – The ability and practice of always dealing with others respectfully. Refusal to succumb to the desire to be vindictive, crass, rude, or slanderous towards others. Honoring and respecting others even when they may not deserve it.

Selflessness – Willingness to be the first to suffer or sacrifice, or to stand between another person and peril even when you are to be injured. Not considering cost to ones' self , and not placing one's own interests above those whom you lead and those whom you follow.

Compassion – Caring for others, for those who suffer, and for the welfare of others. Understanding suffering, and caring properly for those who suffer.

One of the most important aspects of a military leader is that he would instill good morale in the troops. Morale is the confidence, attitude, and discipline of a group. In order to achieve the highest morale in the group, the military leader should pay attention to the following.

First, know that the view, attitude, performance, and character of subordinates will reflect and imitate that of their leader. If the leader is negative, lazy, grumpy, unhappy, or hard to work with, those who follow him will be likewise. If you don't like what you see in your subordinates, take a look at their leader. They tend to be what he is.

Second, The confidence, enthusiasm, and spirit of subordinates is most excellent when their leader knows his stuff. If the leader is competent, intelligent, and informed, morale will be higher. If the leader takes an interest in the opinions of his subordinates, and cares what they think, morale will be improved greatly.

Surveys in the U. S. Military have verified that leaders will be rated highest among their peers when they demonstrate the following seven traits.

1. They stress high standards of performance and want tasks done well. They do not accept half hearted efforts, but expect everyone to do their best.
2. They become personally involved in assuring good performance by the unit as a whole. They are present and involved in assuring quality.
3. They are personally competent at their job. They know their job and do it well.

4. They frequently utilize positive motivation and rewards as incentives to obtain high performance, rather than negative motivation such as punishment.
5. They penalize poor performance and lack of enthusiasm or motivation, and use punishment instructively rather than punitively.
6. They obtain suggestions and ideas from subordinates and use good judgment in accepting or rejecting this information.
7. They act in a way that reduces disruption of the efforts of the unit, and they take steps to avoid disruption of the unit.

Furthermore, leaders in the military were found to excel when they did the following three things.

1. They clearly explained mistakes to their subordinates and gave instruction on how to improve performance.
2. They appropriately used rewards and punishment, and recognized the difference in failures caused by lack of ability, and failure caused by lack of motivation. In other words, they could tell when someone was not able to do a job and when someone was being lazy or acting half hearted.
3. They gave helpful assistance to subordinates to ease the burden of personal and work problems.

A group's willingness to follow its leader was greatly dependent upon four things about their leader.

1. The leader's competence - how good he is at what he does.
2. The leader's interest in participating - how involved he is in the group and the work.
3. The leader's interest in members of the group - how much he cares for them as individuals.
4. The leader's source of authority - the cause and person whom he serves.

Some years ago, a well known church periodical (magazine) provided a list of important leadership traits for pastors and church leaders which sounds a lot like the lists provided for military leaders. They are:

1. Maintain a very high standard of physical appearance (dress, grooming, etc.)
2. Always demonstrate an excellent attitude - never negative, condescending, insulting, or gloomy.
3. Be a perfect example of faithfulness - always be there, on time, in your place, and doing your best.
4. Act like and be the leader - be out front, take charge, greet people, be on your feet making a difference. Don't just sit in the congregation and do nothing.
5. Know what needs to be done and see that it gets done.

6. Make things happen for God. Don't wait for others or watch others as they do things, be someone who also does things.
7. Be an example for everyone. Leadership is the art of influencing men. Being someone that others want to follow, and someone that they can look up to and be like is important.
8. Display excellent communication skills, using good grammar, mature speech, and proper terminology. Do so to be effective, not to impress.
9. Don't be afraid. Deal with problems and people. Confront error and disobedience.
10. Have a vision and give that vision to others. Know the goal and make sure others know the goal.

Finally, here is a list of ten of the things that are most difficult when you are a leader.

1. Telling people "No" can be very difficult. They won't like it, and they won't like you for doing it. That two letter word (No) can cost you greatly, but it is essential.
2. It is hard to admit the mistakes you make. But, you must.
3. It is hard to avoid pride, and keep from letting pride dictate your actions.
4. It is hard to be alone (as a leader); having no one that you can trust or talk to openly.
5. It is hard having nobody to tell you what to do or to correct you when you make a mistake. It is shocking at first. When you are in command, people will almost never correct you or point out your errors. This means that you must know without any assistance from others.
6. It is hard to find the right people to do the work.
7. It is hard to be organized, and getting that way, and staying that way. Knowing how to spend your time and having self discipline to keep working is difficult.
8. It is hard to be conscious of quality in the long term (i.e. year after year), not lowering standards, and not losing desire to do the most and to do it best.
9. It is hard to accept the fact that many people will dislike you because of where you stand, and what you stand for.
10. It is hard to properly manage personal and family time in contrast to leadership obligations. There must be a balance, and if it is incorrect it will cost you your ministry.

Having read these lists, you have a choice. You can fool yourself and claim that you meet all these conditions. But, if you really want to be a leader, you should take time to identify your weaknesses and make plans, with God's strength, to overcome them.

CHAPTER 4 – How to Improve Your Leadership Skills and Success

In order to obtain the skills and qualities that are important to a successful leader, our heart and mind must be changed. We need to obtain personal discipline, grow stronger, and have a vision from God which is based upon His wisdom. We can obtain none of these things without God, and God will not force us to obtain them.

But, there are some important things that we can do which will improve our leadership skills. We must decide to do them, and use our time and energy in order to accomplish them. Here are seven things you should work at in order to improve your leadership skills.

1. Perspective – See what is important

You will not have a proper vision unless you spend proper amounts of time in the word of God. A few minutes a day in the Bible is not nearly enough. We must spend so much time in the word of God, hearing from the Lord, that we see things the way God sees them. We must learn to find God's will for our life by using His word. God's will is always in agreement with the Bible. And, God can direct us into specific decisions when we look for answers to our questions by reading the Bible.

You should know your Bible very well. Read and study your Bible every day. Make notes, underline verses that are important, and know how to find answers to questions using the Bible. Read it; memorize it; listen to it; talk to others about it; live according to it. Psalm 1 and Joshua 1:8 tell us that a man who lives according to the Bible will prosper.

If we want to see what is important, it helps to know someone who can see clearly, and try to see what they see. As a younger servant of God, find someone like Paul and be a Timothy to them. Listen to what they find important and have the same mind that they have (Php 2:20). Follow the men that God has given to you as an example. The Bible commands us to obey them that have the rule over us (Heb 13:17).

Practice being unselfish. Make decisions to forsake things that you thought you could not do without. You may want something that God does not want for you (like a car, a better house, nicer clothes, etc.). God knows what we need and when we need it. If we will be content with the things that we have, we will be happy without the things that we don't have.

2. Preparation – Get ready to be a leader

God will prepare us to be a leader if we will let Him. Situations and trials will come into our life that we cannot control and would not have chosen. Sometimes they can be very painful. We should remember that God brings these things into our life to prepare us to be better leaders. Do not avoid them or run from them. Do not compromise in order to escape them. Look for the lessons that God is trying to teach you, and pray for wisdom.

Be courageous. Part of courage is willingness to suffer. You must expect to suffer if you are a servant of the Lord. As you read the Bible, look at all the examples of great servants of God and how much they suffered. Do not run from suffering (I Peter 3:17). When suffering comes, get strength from God by reading His word, praying, and being patient. Endure hardship. Decide in your heart that you are going to be faithful to serve God even when times are hard. Ask God for strength to keep that commitment. It may be that you must get strength for one day at a time, maybe even one hour at a time. God will give you strength for today (Psalm 37:39).

Take advantage of every opportunity that you have to use your talents to serve God. If someone offers you an opportunity to serve, take it. If you see a need, try to meet it. Ask God for wisdom, but be a worker who is ready to accept a challenge and complete a task. Just as physical exercise makes our muscles stronger, using the talents that God has given us will make them grow.

3. Principles – Be godly

If we are going to be useful to God, we must decide to live by godly standards of honesty, purity, and godliness, and fight every day to retain those standards in our life (Daniel 1:8). Honesty, for example, is a decision that we should make now. When the temptation to be dishonest comes, we should have already decided that we would never be dishonest. If we fail, we must ask God to forgive us and then continue to strive against sin.

The Bible says we can decide to walk in the spirit and flee youthful lusts (II Tim 2:22, Heb 12:1). We must be careful not to allow sin into our life because we can develop a habit or desire for sins that we allow. Sin gives our flesh satisfaction, but it gives our spirit sadness and grief. It hurts our soul. The flesh will always want more sin, and sin can trap us, tangle us up, and make it impossible to go forward for God. Sin is more dangerous than we realize, and it will stop us from being a successful leader.

Practice trying to please God even when your decision does not please men. Men who love God will be pleased when you live a godly life, but others will not. We should consider and do God and what He would have us to do even when men disagree with us. We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). We should not do things just so men can see us and be impressed (Matt 6:2, 5, 16).

4. Perspiration – Work hard

It is not easy to be a hard worker. You can see how most people don't like to work hard, and many are even lazy. We cannot be a successful leader unless we are willing to work hard.

Do one thing at a time, and be careful to do your best. Put all of your effort into each task. The Bible says we should use all of our available strength when we do things (Eccl 9:10).

Look around at others who work hard, and try to be like them. Don't be the first one to stop working, be the last. When someone else is working hard, help them. Be an example to other

people of how hard they should work. Don't quit working just because someone else quits. Arrive early and don't leave until the work is all finished. Don't make excuses for yourself.

Give yourself to others. Let them have your time, your heart, and your prayers. The more time you give to others, the more effective you can be for God. There is time that we need to spend for ourselves, but be careful not to get selfish and spend too much time for yourself.

Get organized. Don't make excuses about this, just do it. You should know where things are, what is going on, what things will be happening in the future, and what work is most important to get done first. If you don't know how to get organized, find someone who can help you to do so. Ask someone who is organized to teach you what to do. Start by keeping lists of things, calendars, and simple records of what needs to be done. You will not become organized overnight, and some people are better at this than others, but there is no excuse for being disorganized, sloppy, or unprepared.

5. Persistence – Have endurance

It is easy to quit; lots of people quit things every day. A successful leader cannot be a quitter. The devil wants you to quit. Decide not to let him have his way. It will not be easy, but if you quit you will not get anything done for God.

When you fall, get back up. A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again (Prov 24:16). Expect times of disappointment, discouragement, rejection, trial, and opposition. If you are never opposed by anyone, you aren't doing anything for God. The opposition to what you are trying to do may be very great, but endure no matter how great it is. The Lord Jesus Christ was despised and rejected of men. He was hated by men who had no cause to hate Him (John 15:25). You will be too, if you are serving God. You will know grief, sadness, rejection, and sorrow if you serve Christ in the right way. The Bible says it is a bad thing for all men to speak well of us (Luke 6:26).

As you grow older, you will find that your health is very important. Get the right amount of sleep (not too much and not too little), get some exercise, eat right, keep your weight at a healthy level, and avoid junk food and too much sugar. If you get sick, take care of yourself properly. Sadly, too many people have been forced to quit their ministry because they neglected their health, ate too much, or did not take care of their physical condition.

6. Prayer – Spend time talking to God

Set aside a time each day when you get alone and pray to God. Don't be rushed when you do this. Never let anything stop you from doing it. Don't be lazy and let it slip. The servants of God who did great things for Him in the Bible were men of prayer. Daniel prayed three times a day. Jesus prayed early in the morning, and for long periods. Sometimes He prayed all night.

It is good to keep a list of things that you need to pray for, and to make notes when God answers

those prayers. We can look back on what God has done and be encouraged to pray more.

When you feel like you are worried about something, that is probably something that you should be praying about instead of worrying. Add it to your list. The Bible tells us to cast our care upon the Lord (I Pe 5:7). We are told not to worry, but instead that we should pray (Php 4:6).

When you pray, you should expect God to answer. Prayer is not a test or an experiment, it is asking your Father in Heaven to help you or meet your needs. Expect Him to answer your prayers and keep praying for those things that have not yet been answered. If we quit praying, what that tells God is that we really did not want what we were praying about.

If you fail to pray, get back up and start again. You cannot go back and change yesterday, but you can do what is right today. Never stop praying.

7. Patience – Wait on God

The work that you are doing, if you are serving God, is not your work it is His. The results belong to Him, and so does the success. You are only a tool in His hands. What He wants to do with you and when He wants to do it are entirely His decision.

So, find the place where God wants you to be and stay there until He moves you. If God puts you somewhere, then only God has the right to move you somewhere else. Stay where He puts you until He makes it perfectly clear that it is time to move.

When there is no progress, or even when things seem to be getting worse and not better, don't stop doing what God wants you to do. Sometimes God will allow your work to have no fruit. Sometimes He will even prune branches off of the tree, making your work seem like it is losing rather than gaining. Don't quit. God will not forsake you, and He promised that we will reap if we faint not (Gal 6:9).

Conclusion

Have godly vision, prepare yourself for what comes later, live a godly life, work hard, endure hardship, pray faithfully, and wait on God. We know what each of these things are, and we know that they are not easy. We have examples in the Bible of men that did these things, but now it is our turn. If we exclude any of them, we will not be a successful leader. If we are careful to do each of them, God can use us to accomplish His will. The decision is ours.

CHAPTER 5 – Obstacles to Successful Leadership

No leader is perfect. Anyone who expects to find a perfect leader is going to be disappointed. But, it is our duty as people who are called to serve God in leadership to avoid saying, doing, or being things that will hinder God's ability to use us, or keep others from following us. It is important that we avoid things that can make us less effective, or ineffective, for God.

There are a number of obstacles that must be removed from our life and avoided if we want to be a successful leader. If people see these things in us, they will have trouble following us, and God will have trouble using us. We will not be successful leaders if these things are found in our life.

Dishonesty – Romans 12:17 says, “Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” We must keep any promises that we make, and avoid making a promise we cannot keep. If we say something, or make a statement, it should be the truth. Even when we make an effort to be honest, we will sometimes say things that seem inaccurate, and sometimes we will make a mistake. When this happens we should be careful to correct the misunderstanding.

It is best to avoid handling money that belongs to the church or other people. When you must handle money, make sure there is a witness to confirm that nothing was stolen. If you are a thief, or use God’s money for your own purposes, you don’t belong in leadership. God is not going to bless a thief. Never take, without having proper permission, anything that belongs to God or other people. Follow II Corinthians 8:21 and make sure that in the sight of God, and men, you are seen to be honest.

Laziness – Proverbs 19:15 says, “Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.” A sloth is an animal that moves so slowly that moss grows on his back. The Greek word for “sloth” means, “slow feet.” We use the term “slothful” to describe someone who is lazy. In leadership, you cannot be lazy.

Avoid laziness by working hard. Working hard requires an effort and decision on your part. Keep track of how many hours you spend working, and put in a full day each day. Be completely willing to forfeit periods of rest in order to meet needs or get jobs done. Do not put things off just because you can. Don't make excuses to yourself or to other people when you don't want to work. (Pr 22:13). Laziness is waste, and it takes away from time we could use to accomplish things for God. There will be times when you would like to rest, but cannot. God knows when you need rest and He will meet that need.

Selfishness – Luke 17:33 tells us that seeking to save our life for ourselves is a sure way to lose its eternal value. The more selfish you are, the less you will be able to accomplish for God. Selfishness is normal. It comes from our flesh (Php 2:21). Luke 14:26-27 teaches us that we must be willing to take up our cross in order to be a disciple of Jesus. If we are selfish, we will find ourselves all alone, because others will not want to be around us or led by us. God will do His greatest work in your life only after you sacrifice the things that you wanted most for yourself like possessions, occupations, locations, etc.

Immorality – Romans 8:8 reads, They that are in the flesh cannot please God. Eph 5:3 declares, “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.” Improper physical relationships have destroyed many men and women of God, and have caused the failure of many leaders. Almost anyone who has been saved for very long probably knows someone who has failed in this way.

The best way to avoid immorality is to never sample or try it at all. It is a poison. We should run from it. The sins of the flesh give temporary empty moments of pleasure, followed by extended painful periods of guilt, sadness, pain, and suffering as explained in Proverbs 7:6-27. Immorality is the satisfying of the desires of the flesh in disobedience to God. But, the flesh is never satisfied and will always want more. The man who seeks satisfaction through immorality will never find it, and he will lose the blessings of God that he once had.

Fear – Mark 4:40 teaches us that fearfulness is nothing more than an absence of faith. God has promised to protect us and belief in that promise is like a shield as read in Ephesians 6:16. Fear is the opposite of courage - courage is ‘not being afraid to suffer’ and ‘not being afraid to fail.’ When you are afraid or fearful, and refuse to expose yourself to risk and danger, you will accomplish little or nothing. Fear is the opposite of faith, and the fearful man therefore cannot please God. In II Timothy 1:7 we are taught that “God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power.

Compromise/Disobedience – Moses could have left Egypt much quicker (see Exodus 10) if he had accepted Pharaoh's compromise offers, but he would have been out of God's will. The world will try to get you to compromise. It will make offers to you to stay in the world and serve God there. (Ex 8:25), or not to go too far out of the world (Ex 8:28), or to leave your family to the world (Ex 10:8-11) or leave your possessions in the world (Ex 10:24). Moses rejected all of these offers, and you should too.

In Joshua 1:8, God commanded Joshua to "observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." Success depends on obedience.

There are many examples of failure in the Bible. Those who failed were guilty of falling into the traps laid by sin. Lot chose what he could see was pleasing to his flesh, and his eyes ruined him. (Gen 13:10). Nabal was so rude, coarse, and angry (churlish) that God smote him and he died. (I Samuel 25:2, 37-38). Saul - disobeyed God over and over, and finally it was too much and God rejected him. (I Samuel 15:23, 26). Demas - forsook Paul because he loved the world and he quit serving God. (II Tim 4:10)

Strive to be an honest, hard working, selfless servant of God. Protect yourself from immorality, fear, and compromise. These ordinary things are the pitfalls that stop many men and women from being successful for God. They can be avoided, but it will require prayer, caution, and effort on our part.

CHAPTER 6 – Conclusion

I asked several pastors to define success. Here is what they said:

“When you have just come out of the fiery furnace and know that it was not you, or man, but God that brought you through.” (Don Stephens, Pastor in Colorado)

"Being faithful to do whatever it is that God has called you to do and to do it with all the strength and energy that you have within you." (John Lacombe, Thailand missionary)

"Finding God's will and doing it." (Doug Hammett, Missionary to Africa)

"Trusting God's Word even when it doesn't make any sense to you." (Randy Starr, Evangelist)

Success is: Building an ark, entering it, and staying there until God says it is safe to leave. (Noah)

Success is: Leaving your home, family, and nation and willingly offering your most precious possession – your son – as a sacrifice to God. (Abraham)

Success is: Forsaking all the riches and pleasures of this world (Egypt) and leading God's stiff necked, disobedient, faithless, murmuring people for forty years in the wilderness. (Moses)

Success is: Taking an untrained, poorly equipped, homeless army of Israelites into battle time and time again until the promised land is conquered. (Joshua)

Success is: Taking a remnant of refugee Jews from captivity back to a broken down neglected city called Jerusalem, and rebuilding the walls and gates while standing guard against the enemy day and night. (Nehemiah).

Success is: Starting with nothing in a foreign land and returning to Jerusalem to rebuild a temple dedicated to the LORD. (Ezra)

Success is: Prophesying exactly what the LORD says for forty years to kings and people who absolutely reject what you are saying, put you in prison, and threaten you with death again and again. (Jeremiah)

When God called the men we label as heroes of the faith, He gave them special advice. He told them what they were to do, but not always exactly how or why. He told them to be courageous, but not exactly what they would be facing as opposition. He told them that He would go with them, and He did! He revealed Himself to them in His glory, through His miracles, and by His deliverance. He told them that they would be asked to suffer for Him.

We need to answer these questions in our life. Have we found God's will for your life? – "Thou

oughtest" (Matt 25:27) Are we seeking it diligently? Do we sincerely desire it? Have we surrendered to it, in spite of the cost?

Are we in God's word daily? Do we know the Bible as you should? Have we memorized many verses? Are we making a daily effort to study, not just to read? Are we finding answers to life's questions in the Bible or elsewhere?

Are we living our faith in Christ, or are we living a faith in something else? Is our life holy? Are we laying up treasure on earth, or in heaven? Do we have godly standards of dress, entertainment, talk, and behavior? Do we trust God or do we worry all of the time?

Are we hard workers? Do others consider us hard workers, or a lazy persons? Do we stay and work while others are working, or do we leave and let them do it? Do we put work first, and entertainment or rest second?

Are we praying as you should? Daily? Purposefully? Fervently? In faith, believing that God will hear and answer?

Are we committed, or are we a quitter? Have we quit things in the past (like school, jobs, etc.) when they got too hard? Is quitting something we consider, or are we determined to go the distance? Are we prepared to keep serving God, even when we can see no results or fruit?

Is God using us now? Have we led anyone to the Lord? Lately? Are we trying? Do we have a job or jobs in church that make a difference to others? Can we see that God has used us to do His work in the past week?

We are responsible for ourselves. We are not responsible for the way everyone else lives their life. Romans 14:10 says, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

There is not a single person who ever lived who could not be a success for the LORD. It is in our hands. God has provided what we need (or He will provide it) to be a success. There are two options at the end of our life: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many." (Matt 25:23) or "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not straved: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." (Matt 25:26-27)

Now, what will we do? The Bible tells us, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might (Eccl 9:10)." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. (Php 2:12-13)" "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (Php 4:13)" and, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then

thou shalt have good success. (Josh 1:8)”

There is a final examination coming for each of us one day, and God has already informed us about what will be tested. He has given us talents. We have what we need to serve Him. He has given us commands. We know what He expects from us. There is a day when we will stand before Him, and the examination will be given. What are we doing for Him? How well will we do when that last test is given? By God’s grace, and by His Spirit, we have an opportunity to do very well, and hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matt 25:21, 23)