

CULEAD

Stewardship Influence Service

CU LEAD Leadership Philosophy

The concept of leadership is tagged onto business, education, athletics, churches, and community centers with the goal of developing individuals who have a passion for work, loyalty and excellence. Our world struggles with the issue of leadership development not because of a lack of effort but because of a lack of clarity. In order to be a leader of people, a person must first grasp *why* leadership is important. Next, he must discuss *what* has been accomplished through effective leadership. Only then can he ask *how* he will lead. According to Webster's Dictionary, a real leader is someone who directs and influences people, but "real leaders," says Oswald Chambers, "are in short supply. Constantly people and groups search for them" (O. Chambers, 2007, p. 15).

The Bible is the guidebook for leadership development. God demonstrates in His Word that when a person is ready to lead, God will use him completely. The question is, how does one prepare to lead? The Bible says it takes commitment to be a disciple of Jesus Christ: submitting to Him, obeying His directions, and being willing to take full responsibility for oneself and others (Luke 14:25-35, English Standard Version). God took over 80 years to train Moses for leadership. When God deemed that Moses was ready to begin, God used him. God did not stop Moses' leadership training after his first mission but continued the process throughout his life.

Effective leadership development begins with a commitment to God and His Word and then progresses to a love for others. Leaders do not require a position of influence to lead others. The mindset and passion of a leader must be grounded in his acknowledgement of God's love for him. The leader then has the framework to be effective, to do the right thing, and to show love for God and for others.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

Why Lead?

In the fourth chapter of Esther, Mordecai tell his niece Esther that she must go before the king to beg for the lives of the people of Israel. Esther denies her uncle's command because she is afraid, so Mordecai, a real leader, uses his influence and challenges Esther, "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" If Mordecai had refused to lead, Esther would have failed.

To lead is a command of God. God came. God poured out His love and power. God justified us through Christ's death on the cross. God made us heirs to His kingdom (Titus 3:4-8). He has lavished love on us; indeed, everything we have comes from God (James 1:17). He

requires us to be good stewards of the gifts, abilities, and opportunities He provides. To exercise these gifts as a good steward does not require a position or title; rather, leadership employs these gifts in following God's command to create disciples for Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19).

“But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, he saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, who He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.” (Titus 3:4- 8)

According to Titus 3:4-8 our responsibility is to “carefully engage in good deeds” for the benefit of others. God has done so much for us, but His work is not finished. He commands believers to go and make disciples from all nations. Disciple-making requires leading and influencing those around you.

To lead is what the world expects. Our world is growing and developing faster than ever before; technology and information are everywhere and readily available. It is vital for leaders to know how to be effective. Our world is looking for individuals who possess the ability to lead as well as the desire to serve others through leadership. In his book *The Effective Executive*, Peter Drucker contrasts manual labor and knowledge labor. The world today, no matter if it is a blue collar or white collar job, is designed for the knowledge worker. The knowledge worker is an individual who has been trained to use theory and knowledge in solving problems and meeting the mission of the job or business: “The knowledge worker cannot be supervised closely or in detail. He can only be helped. But he must direct himself, and he must direct himself toward performance and contribution, that is toward effectiveness” (Drucker, p. 11). Our world is desperately looking for capable, smart, and service-oriented leaders; therein lies an opportunity to influence others.

To lead provides an opportunity to serve others. True leadership is not a position of honor or power but one of humility and service. The motivation for leading is the opportunity to positively influence others, which is one of the keys to leadership. Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Because of God's love and provision, the leader is required to excel in all areas of his life with the goal of influencing others to follow Jesus Christ. A leader influences others by providing an example to follow.

What Is Biblical Leadership?

Leaders can only be developed if there is a specific and memorable definition of leadership. The Bible provides us with examples demonstrating that true leadership is first of all grounded in

God and His Word and then committed to the benefit of others. The essence of biblical leadership is built upon the foundation of our relationship with God.

A Biblical definition of leadership. Leadership is stewarding one's God-given gifts, abilities, and opportunities, and using them to influence and serve others. The goal of biblical leadership development must be to develop the individual through a holistic program committed to developing a leadership foundation and providing a leadership lens through which to view all opportunities. Biblical leadership can be broken down into the following three key words: stewardship, influence, and service.

Key words for Biblical leadership. Our world is full of distractions, so it is the responsibility of the leader to develop a system or culture that is easy to remember and recall. The concepts of stewardship, influence, and service break down the definition of leadership into memorable applications and lessons.

Stewardship. Leaders must acknowledge that everything comes from God. The parable of the talents demonstrates that individuals are given things by God and are responsible to use these for His and the benefit of others (Matthew 25: 14-30). The Bible is clear that everything in this world and everything that we will ever have is created by and given from God. Stewardship provides the leader with the foundation that all work is from and for God.

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever amen” (I Peter 4:10-11).

We have all received unique gifts from God, and we are commanded to steward those gifts by using them to serve others. We do this not because we are good people but because God is a great God, and by His grace we have been redeemed and justified. Christian leaders are called to be the voice and hands of Jesus Christ to the world. This is our opportunity to share and live out the Gospel in everyday life. The purpose is not to get the most recognition and rewards or to have the best title but to bring glory to God the Father. In order to be a real and effective leader one must comprehend and accept that every gift, ability, and opportunity is from God.

Influence. “Leadership is a sacred trust and the art of influence. It is the ability to motivate, inspire and impel people to accomplish a mission” (Antal, 2013, p. 157). It is not enough to appeal to and win a person's intellect; a leader must know how to connect with the heart of the person. People follow people. In order to gain the privilege and opportunity of influencing others, leaders must win the hearts of their followers. Today's world is fast-paced and there never seems to be enough time in the day for everything on the agenda. Leaders must make time for others, so they must organize and plan.

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:15-17).

God expects leaders to be actively working and doing what is effective, the right thing. In Ephesians 5 Paul uses walking to illustrate the importance of actively determining how our gifts, abilities, and opportunities can be used to benefit others. Influence is defined by *Merriam Webster* as “the power to change or affect someone or something.” In order to affect someone, one must first set the example and then actively make the most of the opportunities given. Leaders must lead by example by doing the following: accept responsibility and deflect praise; be learners and teachers; apologize first and often; and be consistent. Influence is established and developed by the leader’s integrity. Every individual has a sphere of influence; the question is not who or when she will influence but rather how she will use her influence.

Service Leaders realize and accept that true leadership is not a position of honor or power but one of humility and service. Leaders validate their leadership by service. A leader must serve others by doing the following: assisting others in accomplishing specific goals, removing obstacles, on-the-job training, and character development. Jesus provides us with the perfect example of service leadership. He took time to listen, teach, correct, and love even when people did not show respect or love to Him. Mark 10:35-45 tells the story of James and John asking to be placed on Jesus’ right and left sides when He is on His throne in heaven. Jesus, who is our example of stewardship, influence, and service, answers the two brothers by telling them that this is not a position for Him to give. He then uses His influence to teach them by asking if they are capable of fulfilling the duties of these positions. Naturally, the other ten disciples become frustrated with the brothers, and Jesus again uses His influence to teach them that if anyone wants to become great, he must be a servant of all, and if anyone wants to be first, he must be a slave to all: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Jesus, the rightful King and Lord, did not come into the world to make others serve Him, but He came recognizing He had the privilege and opportunity to serve mankind with the goal of bringing glory to God the Father. Christ’s example prompts Matthew Perman to ask, “If Christ, who has the highest position in the entire universe as Lord of all, uses his power and authority and position to serve, how can we think that we are relieved from the obligation to serve in our lesser positions?” (Perman, 2014, p. 94).

How to Lead

Leadership requires two things: a strong relationship with God and a willingness to work. In order to lead one must be willing to work. A leader realizes that work is a gift and a calling from the Lord (Keller, 2012, p. 18).

A leader must have a strong foundation in the doctrine of scripture.

“Even if the leader doesn’t fall publicly, a leader whose heart is not rooted in Christ and actively growing can be just as devastating to a ministry. Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” Jesus did not say we can do little separate from Him” (Greer & Horst, 2014, p. 90).

A leader’s relationship with Jesus Christ is the foundation for leadership. John 15 presents Jesus as the vine who gives life to His people, the branches. This illustrates that a leader must abide with, rest in, depend upon, and submit to God in order to be effective and productive. Or, as Perman put it, “The way to become truly productive is to anchor our lives squarely and securely on the great truths of the Bible, especially the gospel of justification by faith alone” (Perman, 2014, p. 108). A dynamic relationship with Christ will enhance a leader’s productivity and effectiveness.

Love for God. As we have explored, a leader must understand that leadership is stewarding one’s God-given gifts, abilities, and opportunities, and using them to influence and serve others. The first step of learning how to lead is learning how to follow. We are called to be followers of Jesus Christ, submitting to His plan, purposes, and goals for our lives. Jon Wood, Vice-President for Student Life and Christian Ministries at Cedarville University, says “Our responses to God’s grace towards us should be a deep love for God, and this love is the first qualification for leadership.” God’s love must be the foundation for leaders, otherwise the foundation will crack and deteriorate over time.

Romans 12:1-2 provides us with a guide for showing love for God through biblical leadership. We are motivated by the mercies of God, and we are called to present our bodies as living sacrifices as a “reasonable service.” Leaders do this by actively serving those whom God has brought into their spheres of influence. God, through His Word, warns us not to conform to this world. Leaders must not love and desire the things of this world more than the person of God. We are told that we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Leaders must be learners, and not just learners of temporal knowledge but students of the Word of God. We are called to prove what the will of God is for our lives and to demonstrate that His will is good, acceptable, and perfect. Leaders must be submissive to God and His Word; this is how we identify God’s will for our lives.

In short, leaders must have an active love for God and demonstrate that love through commitment to Scripture, prayer, and the church. William Wilberforce said, “You cannot endure in bearing fruit if you sever the root.”

Love for Others. Love for others demands that leaders have moral courage and strong resolve to do excellent work with the intent to serve others. Moral courage demands that leaders do not take the easy road when it comes to conflict management and resolution. Leaders must also demonstrate moral courage to the team in loving others consistently in all circumstances. To show love, a leader must be committed to producing excellence for the purpose of serving others.

In his book *What's Best Next*, Matt Perman defines productivity in this way: “Success in business and life does not come from crushing the weak, doing as little as you can get away with, and trying to get every dime you can out of people. It comes from the opposite: helping the weak, going the extra mile, and putting others first” (2014, p. 80). Leaders show love to others by working with all of their hearts, souls, and minds for the glory of God (Matthew 22:37-40).

A leader must have a true love for God as the foundation, but the next part of the construction for successful and sustainable leadership is a love for others. Jesus does not just say that we are to love others; He tells us that we are to love others the way we love ourselves. Great leaders are those who make their priority the success of the team and organization.

To love others means that leaders understand and accept the following responsibilities: realize that God is the giver of gifts, abilities, and opportunities, recognize that influence is a key to leadership, and celebrate the opportunity to demonstrate love through service. Leaders validate their leadership by their service.

Integrity in Conduct. Integrity is a matter of the heart; if the heart is bad, the integrity will be nonexistent. The integrity of a leader is rooted in one’s relationship with Jesus Christ. Integrity is demonstrated through the conduct of the leader and in how she values consistency. If integrity is to be consistent and seen as a core value, a leader must be committed to the Gospel and to the doctrine of the Word of God.

Lt. General Loren Reno, retired United States Air Force General and Interim Vice President for Academics at Cedarville University, developed the following statements explaining how leaders can demonstrate their integrity: integrity is coming in person, looking your best, and admitting when you have made a mistake; integrity is not easy but is difficult and risky; integrity is not avoiding the task but doing the job that needs to be done; integrity is doing things very well; integrity is not faking and acting like you know more than you know; integrity is doing the right thing even if it means that people will avoid you; integrity is the play-out of your character.

Excellence in Effort. Why is it important for a leader to be the best in work and relationships? The reason can be found in Romans 8:32 which says, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” God did not hold anything back from the world or from us. As His disciples, we should respond by loving God with all of our hearts, minds and soul, loving others as we love ourselves, and living lives that are marked with integrity. Leaders can be assured that God promises to provide the resources and strength necessary to accomplish the work. All work has dignity because it was created by God, and God Himself works (Keller, 2012, p. 49).

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, hold and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of

unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in you hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father” (Colossians 3:12-17).

Dr. Thomas Mach, Chair of the School of History and Government at Cedarville University, describes excellence in this manner: “Excellence is not about talent; it is more about the effort you put into it.” Excellence takes work and is a command of God to all disciples of Jesus Christ. God promises He will provide the strength necessary for us to accomplish the great work He has given us to do. Leaders must demonstrate a love for God by being excellent in all areas of work and relationships. Leaders must express their love for others by providing their absolute best at all times. Leaders hold high levels of integrity by taking care of every detail and being excellent in all things. Leaders who demonstrate excellence in all things will earn the opportunity and privilege of influencing others. Leaders who provide excellence validate the service that is provided to others. Leaders must be excellent because it is the right thing to do; it is exciting and challenging; it is the way to serve others (Perman, 2014, p. 22).

Final Thoughts

Leadership is a mindset that begins with acknowledging and accepting that God has called us to follow Him and lead others. Titus 3:4-8 explains that God gave us His Son who came to save the world, but He did not stop with saving. He provided the Holy Spirit who guides Christ’s followers through decisions and life, and we are called to devote ourselves to do good works and to be excellent in these efforts. A few verses before this passage Paul, the author of the book of Titus, shares with the readers that they are to be zealous for good works (Titus 2:14). Zealousness demands and challenges the pursuit of excellence and perfection. God has called the leader to be zealous and to devote himself to doing the work God has provided.

Leadership is stewarding one’s God-given gifts, abilities, and opportunities, and using them to influence and love others. These gifts, abilities, and opportunities are not always easy or desirable but they are good and will bring glory to God the Father (James 1:17).

Great leaders make the most of the time and opportunities they are given because leadership is not about self; it is about others. Leadership is influence. Everyone can influence someone. Everyone can be influenced by someone. In Romans 12:1-2 Paul challenges his readers to use everything in life to worship God. Paul also warns his readers not to be influenced by the world or allow the world to be more important than God. He gives them a recipe which leaders can use today: leaders must renew their mind with the Word of God.

Once a leader has discovered and submitted to the fact that leadership is a stewardship of what God has given and that leadership is influence, she can now serve others the way Jesus served when He washed the disciple's feet.

“Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded” (John 13:3-5).

Jesus knew who He was, but He did not let His Godhood stand in the way of serving the people God had called Him to lead. In order to be a true leader, one must be willing to serve and to serve eagerly, willingly, and with humility. As Christ demonstrated, leaders validate leadership through humble service.

References

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