

---

# Ten Lessons I Have Learned About Authentic *Christian* Leadership

Allan Davis

---

---

# Ten Lessons

1. ***The effective Biblical Christian leader is an authentic and consistent follower of Christ, having an obvious relationship with (and dependence on) God***
  2. ***Leadership worth following demonstrates high standards of personal integrity***
  3. ***The genuine Christian leader sees ministry as a call, to “service”, a developed life, not a vocation/position/job/personal possession***
  4. ***Focus is essential if the leader is to know which way to go***
  5. ***Having done well, the genuine Christian leader seeks to excel***
  6. ***Effective Christian leadership functions through team relationship***
  7. ***Good leaders genuinely like people***
  8. ***Leaders have followers – by definition – and must look after them***
  9. ***Good leaders are made by trials and tests that cleanse and shape them***
  10. ***Christian leaders of influence know what is “going on”***
-

# 1. The Leader's Life

***The effective Biblical Christian leader is an authentic and consistent follower of Christ, having an obvious relationship with (and dependence on) God***

- spiritual focus – not materialistically driven, but listening to the Holy Spirit
- has the right attitudes:
  - ❖ motivation to experience/please God, be a worshipper
  - ❖ desire to reflect the character and person of Christ, with the Holy Spirit's help/transformation
  - ❖ followership – not “top down”, but modelling submission to the Lordship of Christ
  - ❖ servanthood – not emphasizing “rights”
  - ❖ empathy – able and willing to “walk in the shoes” of others
  - ❖ appreciation of the nature of power & authority, but proven as trustworthy with the reins
  - ❖ collegiality
  - ❖ humility
  - ❖ strong self-discipline in all areas of personal life
  - ❖ commitment to hard work
  - ❖ boldness (even if not natural temperament), but not brashness; linked to confidence in God
- a learner
  - ❖ hungry to grow spiritually, intellectually, relationally
  - ❖ continually adding knowledge, skills and wisdom (formally and informally)
  - ❖ open to learn from other leaders and followers (including gifted people who do not necessarily become functional “leaders”)
  - ❖ aware there is no end point in the learning journey

---

## 2. The Leader's Integrity

*Leadership worth following demonstrates high standards of personal integrity*

- transparency, accountability
  - submission to God and others; willingness to be corrected
  - pursues integrity in the home (moral uprightness, cover for family, mutual submission to spouse)
  - has integrity in finances and treatment of assets
  - maintains honesty in relationship dealings
  - preserves confidences
  - chooses friends very carefully
  - public and private personae match
  - aware of own humanity
  - aware of range of moral threats that de-rail leaders, and has strong safeguards in place
  - prepared to de-brief regularly with trusted colleagues
  - reliable, dependable
  - consistent
  - “walks the talk”
  - credible – the “individual” is real and can be trusted
  - is alert to potential blind spots
-

---

# 3. The Leader's Call

***The genuine Christian leader sees ministry as a call, to “service”, a developed life, not a vocation/position/job/personal possession***

- understands that the call of God is by divine appointment, not based on own personality, human achievements or agendas
  - recognizes and is secure in own call – prepared to be patient and trust God about release if other (including older) leaders do not yet see/acknowledge it
  - knows the *nature* of the call, so that this can be given effect to, rather than loss of productivity and results that come from trying to fulfill all roles and meet the diverse expectations of many
  - streamlines and regulates activities in line with the call, with a cooperative spirit
  - engaged in a work based on passions, aligned to circumstances, rooted in divine impartation
  - does not focus on hierarchy or titles as ends in and of themselves
  - recognizes the nature, use, results and potential abuse of spiritual authority
  - promotes/celebrates the call of God in the lives of others – honestly (even if they have call/capacity to exceed the leader's own experiences/outcomes)
-

---

# 4. The Leader's Focus

*Focus is essential if the leader is to know which way to go*

- clear vision
    - ❖ integral part of a larger “whole”
    - ❖ able to articulate it clearly and confidently, in submission to God
    - ❖ does not “flip flop” in goal setting and direction
    - ❖ aware of context - builds with eternal values in mind
  - has drive and enthusiasm to see the vision come to pass
  - eye on the goal/destination
  - has a “road map”, but is flexible as to timing and means of delivery where necessary
  - sets pace in line with people’s capacities/expandability, skills and growth stages, but is not restricted in thinking by these
  - open to innovation and agile
  - strong commitment; a divine call, eternal cause, aiming for results that are measurable and durable (legacy)
  - focus does not come from church governance structures (“Wag the dog”), but can nevertheless be understood (and signed onto) by committee members
  - tracks performance, progress and quality of results
-

---

# 5. The Leader & “Excellence”

*Having done well, the genuine Christian leader seeks to excel*

- understands that there is always a need to “go to the next level”, to avoid complacency or mediocrity (or both)
  - desires excellence as part of the organizational structure/culture
  - aims for durable results
  - underlying agenda is to glorify God (ultimate audience of One)
  - understands excellence is often related to victorious outcomes – not half-hearted, sloppy or shoddy
    - counter-balanced with the reality that the best preparation, attitudes and planning are often influenced as to outcomes by dependencies, input/output of others; we are all “human”
  - ensures achievable standards are developed, written down, understood, embraced and taught and performance against them is expected (starting with self)
  - pursues excellence in all fields, eg work quality, record keeping
  - seeks to use excellence/credibility to expand influence
  - able and willing to keep an eye on everything, to ensure people with responsibilities do not go off the tracks
  - patient with co-workers who are still learning standards/expectations/processes
-

# 6. The Leader as a Team Player

## *Effective Christian leadership functions through team relationship*

- builds up/contributes to the team, with complementary gifts, skill sets, experience
- mutual trust, encouragement, care and support characterize the team's inter-relationships
- inclusive, not dismissive
- walks in step with team at all levels, even if "ahead" in some areas (or "behind" in others)
- identifies and raises up other leaders, multiplies leaders, mentors, models, provides practical instructions, plans for succession, releases people in their areas of ministry and competence
- casts/carries vision, as appropriate, but remains open to input, suggestions, correction, advice, counsel
- not authoritarian
- willing to delegate to, and work with, trusted others and not micro-manage them/their performance
- prepared to go "above and beyond" what is expected of the team (within functional logic)
- sets out expectations of self and others very clearly
- able to assess the character of other team leaders
- a strong commitment to communicate and keep team morale high
- awareness of where "the buck stops" (responsibility) and does not evade the bottom line
- trusted by the team because members feel/know they are "covered"
- genuinely interested in the welfare of team members
- committed to team "solidarity" and unity
- recognizes limits within which team members operate (eg age, time capacities)
- pursues ethical relationships with all team members

---

# 7. The Leader & Other People

## *Good leaders genuinely like people*

- values people (for their own sake, not simply as contributors to execution of own vision)
  - cares for individuals as people, not machines, tools, stepping stones, sources of work, support, wealth or influence
  - recognizes the diversity of people and willing/able to work with such diversity
  - willingly and openly grateful for others and their efforts; overtly appreciative – not taking individuals for granted or “assuming” or trading on their support, availability, cooperation
  - prepared to counsel and correct others as appropriate, but with patience and love, to affirm them, not to prove points, rights or authority
  - plans and puts strategies in place to draw out the willing best in people
  - committed to the principle and praxis of “positive leadership”, to impart confidence, optimism and resilience
  - committed to “the one” (person) as well as “the remaining ninety-nine”
  - prepared to learn how to relate cross-culturally
  - generous
  - prepared to forgive, not hold grudges, emphasize disappointment
  - builds up others, rather than nagging them or dwelling on criticism about their failings
-

---

# 8. The Leader's Followers

***Leaders have followers – by definition – and must look after them***

- people usually enjoy working with trusted, godly leaders
  - people stake a lot on those they follow, because there are usually life consequences
  - followers want to be able to understand, articulate and be committed to, the leadership's vision
  - followers want to be able to trust, believe in and reflect, the leadership's values and message
  - followers look for leaders who will recognise their skills, strengths and passions and will endeavour to develop their capabilities and release them (while not cutting them loose)
  - followers have a WIIFM ("What's in it for me?") approach – good leaders take this reality into account, as appropriate to the overall vision, the nature of the work and the life/ performance/ credibility of followers
  - followers are attracted to leaders who will look after them (and uphold/restore them when difficulties come)
  - in a dynamic world people look for skilled change agents
  - communication, engagement and encouragement are essential in any relationship
  - followers will fall away or find new leaders if they cannot keep up
  - in view of the above, good leaders keep followers in their thinking and planning and work hard on relationships
-

---

# 9. The Leader's Testing

***Good leaders are made by trials and tests that cleanse and shape them***

- willing to surrender, be developed, tested, aware there is always a “price to pay” for service
  - willing to be “under the spotlight”
  - growing understanding of (and honesty about) own humanity
  - awareness of why many leaders “burn out”, why seemingly good ministries are sometimes shipwrecked
  - prepared to grow into roles through testing/proving
  - faith that God will try/develop His servants, but is not out to destroy or overwhelm them
  - willing to have boundaries, or to be stretched and go to more responsible or demanding dimensions
  - prepared to learn from pressures, mistakes, disappointing situations, and experience renewal
  - aims to develop resilience, to be strengthened and grow – while ultimately depending on God for breakthroughs
  - has developed confidence (in God) to lead in hard times, as well as good
  - does not permit circumstances to foment cynicism or jadedness (even when things seem to go wrong for reasons outside the leader's control), but keeps heart open to God's dealings and lessons
-

# 10. The Leader's Situation Sensing

*Christian leaders of influence know what is “going on”*

- understands and exercises emotional intelligence
- has a well-developed and proven capacity to “make decisions”
- not “in a hurry” to put others into leadership roles
- aware of where everyone is “up to” – so there are “no surprises”
- has well-developed environmental knowledge and sensitivity
- sees leadership in a life context
- developing leaders who demonstrate faithfulness
- prepared to put aspirations on hold till the right time
- sense of the future
- sense of values that are fruitful
- known as a leader who listens to the Holy Spirit
- knows when to tighten or to hand over the reins
- prepared to let go of ideas/”dead” visions/plans/praxis if things do not work or if the timing is not right

---

# Conflicting Views of Leadership?

- “The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave.”

Jesus Christ, Matthew 20:25-27

- “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.”

Jesus Christ, John 12:26

- - “Those princes who have done great things have held good faith of little account, and have known how to circumvent the intellect of men by craft, and in the end have overcome those who have relied on their word.”
- “Every one sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are,”
- “A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promise.”

Nicolo Machiavelli, 1469-1527

- “It’s hard to be humble, when you are so great.”

Author unknown

---