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# 1 Introduction

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**Serving Jesus in any form of leadership is the highest calling. Nothing is more noble, honorable or of greater eternal significance. And nothing has the potential to be more DYNAMIC!** It is also the most serious responsibility anyone can undertake: with it comes the potential for either great blessing or great judgment [1Ti 5:17-20], for “from everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded” [Lk 12:48].

The success and reputation of the church depends crucially on its *leaders*. Tragically, the church is all too often characterised by an absence of meaningful growth, competition and disharmony, ministerial burnout or moral breakdown - often symptoms of leadership failure. For the church mandated to complete the works of Jesus [Acts 1:1], demonstrate the wisdom of God to the universe [Eph 3:10-11], and prepare the world for the return of Christ [Mt 17:11-13, Mk 9:12-13], a *different kind of leadership* is urgently needed.

Bill Hybels writes: “There is nothing like the local church when it is working right. Its beauty is indescribable. Its power is breathtaking. Its potential is unlimited...I believe that the local church is the hope of the world. I believe to the core of my being that local church leaders have the potential to be the most influential force on planet earth. If they ‘get it’, and get on with it, churches can become the redemptive centres that Jesus intended them to be. Dynamic teaching, creative worship, deep community, effective evangelism, and joyful service will...strengthen families, transform communities, and change the world.”<sup>1</sup>

God wants to fulfil our divinely-inspired longing to lead churches of indescribable beauty, breathtaking power, and unlimited potential... which transform communities and change the world. God has always accomplished His purpose by working through leaders; and He has prescribed clear leadership for the church. We must ask: *What kind of leadership does Jesus’s magnificent church demand and deserve?* We will find that such leadership will be thoroughly DYNAMIC! Let’s begin by defining these terms:

- **“Leadership”** is something we do, rather than a position we occupy; a *function* not an office; a role not a title. Maxwell has concluded: “leadership is influence...nothing more, nothing less”.<sup>2</sup> A leader has followers. Whilst there are aspects of leadership some are *born* with (an innate ability to lead or influence) there is much that can be learned and *developed*. Above all, however, *Christian leadership is a gift from God*, an expression of His grace:

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Terry Virgo, *Does the Future Have a Church?* Kingsway, 2003, 11.

<sup>2</sup> John C Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, Thomas Nelson, 1993, p1

We have different gifts [charisma], according to the grace [charis] given us. If a man's gift is...leadership [proistemi], let him govern diligently [spoude].

### Romans 12:6,8

*Proistemi* means 'to set over; to be over; to superintend or preside over' as well as 'to be a protector or guardian; to give aid; to care for, give attention'. It carries the dual sense of *oversight* and *care*. *Spoude* means 'with haste, earnestness, diligence; earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, or striving after anything; to give all diligence, to interest one's self most earnestly', and is translated as "govern diligently" [NIV], "take the responsibility seriously" [NLT], "in earnest" [Moffatt], "with zeal" [ESV], and "with zeal and singleness of mind" [Amp].

- **"Dynamic"** means 'pertaining to or characterized by energy or effective action; vigorously active or forceful; energetic; concerned with forces that produce motion, as opposed to *static*.' It is a person 'positive in attitude and full of energy and new ideas' or something 'stimulating development or progress'. For us, the overriding essence of 'dynamic' Christian leadership is that it is leadership *in and by the Holy Spirit* - God's very own dynamic breath, energy, power and presence - in His church and His leaders.

Putting this together, we can define anointed, **'dynamic leadership'** as gracious oversight and care, carried out earnestly, diligently, positively, creatively and with much zeal and energy *in the power of the Spirit*. It's a gift from God, an expression of His loving grace towards His people. In these sessions we will consider four aspects of this kind of leadership: dynamic leaders are: *chosen* by the Spirit, *gifted* by the Spirit, *empowered* by the Spirit and *sustained* by the Spirit.

## 2 Dynamic Leaders: Chosen by the Spirit

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Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.

**Mark 3:13-14**

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

**Acts 13:2-3**

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.

**Acts 20:28**

**The starting-point for dynamic (Spirit-inspired) leadership is the assurance that we are called and set apart by God to serve His purposes...**

### 2.1 Hand-Picked!

The Church belongs to Jesus [**Mt 16:18**]; He is its Head [**Col 1:18**], and He is **deeply concerned about its leadership**. During His short earthly ministry, Jesus devoted substantial time to selecting, appointing, training and equipping those men who would become the leaders of the early church. Thus:

- He spent all night in prayer before selecting the Twelve [**Lk 6:12-14**] to "be with Him" [**Mk 3:14**] throughout His ministry.
- He shaped and sharpened these Twelve for three years, preparing them for their future and sending them out with power and authority [**Lk 9:1**] and with detailed instructions for their task [**Lk 9:4-5**].
- He appointed and sent out the Seventy-Two with instructions to ensure their fruitfulness [**Lk 10:1-11**], and their success in ministry brought particular joy to Him [**Lk 10:17-21**].
- He filled the Hundred and Twenty with His Spirit [**Ac 2:4**], having forbidden them from leaving Jerusalem without His enabling power [**Ac 1:4**].

In particular, though, Jesus poured His life into the Twelve: He purposefully and patiently trained them. He was deliberately preparing the core leadership of the early church, and it's unlikely that the first church would have exploded from 120

to tens of thousands after Pentecost if these leaders had not been thoroughly prepared. Jesus's focus during His earthly ministry was not with the multitudes, but with the men who would *lead multitudes*. He continually made the choice to focus on equipping these future leaders; repeatedly, He withdrew from the crowds to be with the Twelve [Mk 9:30]. Beckham says: "Focussing on the multitudes during the beginning stages could have kept Him from eventually reaching the multitudes".<sup>3</sup> Maxwell observes: "A fascinating irony of leadership is that if you want to do something really big that involves a lot of people, you need to narrow your focus to a few people...If you think huge you need to learn to act narrow"<sup>4</sup>.

Jesus 'hand-picked' the Twelve and continues to choose and separate to Himself leaders for His church:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

### Ephesians 4:10-11

Jesus's concern to ensure that the church was left in the right hands was echoed by the Apostles: when further leaders were needed to facilitate growth in Jerusalem, the Twelve were insistent that the Seven men chosen were "full of the Spirit and wisdom" [Ac 6:3]; Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in the churches they had established, and did so "with prayer and fasting" [Ac 14:23]; and Paul gave detailed instructions to Timothy and Titus regarding the choice of elders and deacons.

**All authentic ministry and leadership is ordained by God; And if we are called to lead then we too have been *hand-picked* by Jesus.** The Holy Spirit has set you apart and made you who and what you are! Now, we must "live a life worthy of the calling we have received" [Eph 4:1, 2Th 1:11].

Jesus chose leaders who would "be with Him" [Mk 3:14] and for three years He trained, shaped and equipped these chosen leaders. How did He do it? He inspired them with His *attitude*; He instructed them regarding His *character*; He increased their *faith* until it was like His; and finally He imparted *His Spirit* to them. He returned to heaven fully confident that the church was in the hands of the right leaders. And, when the early church began to make an impact in Jerusalem, it was noted that its leaders "had been with Jesus" [Ac 4:13].

## 2.2 Redefining Greatness

Jesus shattered worldly concepts when He spoke of a Kingdom in which leaders lay down their lives and become servants of others, and in which greatness is measured by *service* not *status*.

<sup>3</sup> William A Beckham, *The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, TOUCH Publications, 1995, p173

<sup>4</sup> John C Maxwell, *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day*, Thomas Nelson, 2000, p335

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.

**Mark 10:43–45, pp Matthew 20:26–28**

Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all"

**Mark 9:35**

The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted

**Matthew 23:11**

Jesus came *to serve* His Father [Mt 12:18, Ac 3:13, 3:26, 4:27, 4:30] and the world [Mk 10:45]. He was both the greatest leader<sup>5</sup> and greatest servant the world has known and He calls His followers to be like Him: [Mt 10:24–25, Jn 13:16, 15:20].

As dynamic leaders, we're hand-picked by Jesus and "set apart" by the Spirit *for Him* and *for the work* He's called us to [Acts 13:2–3]. We are certainly chosen for Greatness! But we are also fundamentally chosen for Service!...

## 2.3 Chosen for Greatness!

God wants to lift our sights and enlarge our vision! If you are a leader in His church you are involved in the greatest task imaginable. There is no higher calling. When we begin to understand the *nature* and *mission* of the church then we can never again see our leadership as small, insignificant or irrelevant. Tragically, most leaders have a vision that's far too small.

The church is those with a *revelation* of Christ, *called out* of the world and *reborn* from above; God's *covenant people*, destined to fill and bless the world. She is uniquely distinguished as the *people of God's presence*; a *charismatic* people in whom God dwells by His Spirit. She is a *community*, a *family* and a *body* of believers expressing an *alternative society*. She is a *prophetic, end-time* people, living in the power of the future age. She is the *Bride of Christ*, preparing herself for His glorious return. And she is the *Gateway to Heaven*; called to use the keys of the kingdom and gather multitudes in!...

Through the church God is reconciling *all things in heaven and on earth* back to Himself; through her His wisdom is being revealed to the entire cosmos! She is preparing the way for the return of Jesus at the end of the age, in the spirit and power of Elijah - opening and closing the heavens, living in abundance, performing miracles, defeating death and bringing life, confronting evil, turning the nations back to God, restoring families, and praying heaven down to earth!...

<sup>5</sup> Jesus is the Chief Apostle (Heb 3:1), Prophet (Lk 13:33), Evangelist (Lk 4:18–19), Pastor (1Pe 5:4, Jn 10:14) and Teacher (Mt 23:10, Jn 13:14), and the supreme example and model for *all leadership* in the church.

So, if you're part of the church – and especially if you have been called into leadership – you are alive to be 'outstanding'. Your purpose was never to fill a pew; your destiny is far greater, far more magnificent, meaningful. **You've not been chosen, hand-picked, set-apart for mediocrity. You've been chosen for GREATNESS!**

There is a vast 'crowd' all around you; it is characterized by ordinariness, usualness, sameness, greyness, unremarkableness, regularity, familiarity, mediocrity, small-thinking, limited vision, low expectation and anticipation... Most people are part of the crowd. BUT YOU were not born to be part of the crowd. You were born to stand out, and be and do something truly great!

## 2.4 Chosen for Servanthood!

You are called for Greatness *and Servanthood*. In the Kingdom, serving is not a pathway to promotion or a preparation for more important things. Humble service is the abiding essence of Christian ministry. A servant-leader is first and foremost *a servant by nature*; servant is what he is not what he does. And he does not serve because he is a leader; he serves because he is *by nature* a servant. We learn to be leaders by learning to be servants. Hence, leaders in the NT church are generally described as ministers or *servants* (*diakonos*).

Similarly, leaders are firstly *followers*. When Jesus called the Twelve it was a call *to follow* not to lead; and they simply and gladly "left everything and followed Him" [Mt 4:18-22]. Only later did they understand that they would be set apart to take up His mantle of leadership. Jesus said "whoever serves me must follow me" [Jn 12:26], and **the first call of a leader is to be a follower and servant of Christ.**

MacArthur writes: "Spiritual leadership...is not a mantle of status to be conferred on the church's aristocracy. It is not earned by seniority, purchased with money, or inherited through family ties. It does not necessarily fall to those who are successful in business or finance. It is not doled out on the basis of intelligence or talent. Its requirements are blameless character, spiritual maturity, and *above all, a willingness to serve humbly.*"<sup>6</sup>

The Twelve regarded themselves as – first and foremost – "servants of God". The salutations of **Ro 1:1, Tit 1:1, Jas 1:1, 2Pe 1:1, Rev 1:1** show that Paul, James, Peter and John regarded their 'position' as servant before their *function* as apostle. Paul describes himself as a servant: *of God* [Ro 15:17, Ro 1:9]; *of Christ* [Ro 1:1, Gal 1:10, Phil 1:1]; *of the gospel* [Eph 3:7, Col 1:23]; and *of the church* [2Co 4:5, Col 1:24-25].

Peter urges believers to "live as servants of God" [1Pe 2:16] and "use whatever gift [one] has received to serve others" [1Pe 4:10], before addressing elders specifically:

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<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur, *Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry*, Word, 1995, p xiv, italics mine



To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, **serv**ing as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but **eager to serve**; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

**1 Peter 5:1-4**

The shepherd exists for the sheep, not vice-versa. Indeed, “the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” [**Jn 10:11**]. Hence, Paul and Barnabas went throughout Syria encouraging the disciples and “appointing elders *for them* in each church” [**Ac 14:23**]. **Dynamic leaders exist to serve God's people.**

## 2.5 What is a Servant?

The word ‘servant’ appears more than 100 times in the NT and is most frequently a translation of *doulos* (54 occasions),<sup>7</sup> meaning ‘slave, bondman, man of servile condition; one who gives himself up to another's will; one devoted to another in disregard of one's own interests’.

The NT concept of servanthood therefore contains the fundamental sense of *slavery* and a *freely-given bonding to a much-loved Master*. Paul regarded himself as a willing slave or bondservant [**Ro 1:1**, **Gal 1:10**] of His beloved Christ.

Serving is a choice; a decision to lay down our lives for something or someone else. But there's also a difference between choosing *to serve* and choosing *to be a servant*. Richard Foster writes: “When we choose to serve, we are still in charge. We decide whom we will serve and when we will serve. And if we are in charge, we will worry a great deal about anyone stepping on us, that is, taking charge over us. But when we choose to be a servant, we give up the right to be in charge. There is great freedom in this. If we voluntarily choose to be taken advantage of, then we cannot be manipulated. When we choose to be a servant, we surrender the right to decide when we will serve. We become available and vulnerable.”

We choose servanthood by “having the same *attitude* as Christ”:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a

<sup>7</sup> Other words translated as servant are *diakonos* (13 times) meaning ‘one who executes the commands of another; a servant, attendant, minister; the servant of a king; a waiter, one who serves food and drink’ and *pais* (12 times) meaning ‘child, servant, slave, attendant’.

man he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!

### Philippians 2:5–8

Here we see:

- *He did not grasp at position* - we abandon wrong ambition and motive and anything (dreams, desires) we're holding onto so tightly as to be 'grasping'.
- *He made himself nothing* - we empty ourselves of our own timetables and agendas, our desires for status and position.
- *He humbled himself* - we rid ourselves of all pride and misplaced thinking about our gifts, talents, abilities.
- *He was obedient* - we submit everything to the Lordship of Christ.

## 2.6 Death in Service

Servanthood therefore starts at the cross; 'dying to self' and choosing to live for a greater purpose [Lk 9:23-25], and is an ongoing discipline and choice in our lives. Death and service are inextricably linked. Jesus said:

Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

### John 12:23–26

Foster writes: "In some ways we would prefer to hear Jesus's call to deny father and mother, houses and land for the sake of the gospel than his word to wash feet. Radical self-denial gives the feel of adventure. If we forsake all, we even have the chance at glorious martyrdom. But in service we must experience the *many little deaths* of going beyond ourselves."

In dying to self and embracing servanthood there is also great security and liberty: we choose to reject the world's systems of promotion and authority; we let go of our desire to be seen somewhere in a 'pecking order' and are set free:

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

### Galatians 5:13

When we're free to serve, God knows He's found someone who won't misuse their gift for personal gain...and the foundations of godly dynamic leadership are laid.

## 2.7 Hallmarks of Servant-Leadership

In light of the above, consider these characteristics of true servant-leaders<sup>8</sup>:

- Their paramount aim is the *best interests of those they lead*, rather than any self-interest.
- Their satisfaction lies in the *growth and development of those they lead*, and they genuinely rejoice to see this progress.
- They willingly *accept obligation and duty*, even when required to undertake tasks they would prefer not to do.
- They have a *desire for effective accountability*, rather than being independent.
- They have a *caring love* for those they lead, which expresses itself in practical action.
- They are *willing to listen* to those they lead, open to feedback and advice rather than being defensive.
- They are *humble*, with a realistic and sound judgment of their strengths and limitations.
- They are willing to *share power* with others, because their goal is something bigger than themselves.
- They are *free from jealousy* and competitiveness, and from other trivialities which have no meaning for a man who's died to self at the cross.

## 2.8 The Rewards of Service

There are substantial 'rewards' for faithful service in the Kingdom of God:

- Serving will always result in *blessing* because of the eternal principle of sowing and reaping; it is more blessed to give than to receive [**Ac 20:35**].
- Faithfulness in serving God and others results in an *expansion of responsibility* [**Lk 16:10-15**]. Servants who make good use of their talents are commended and entrusted with more [**Mt 25:14-30**]. Servant-leaders faithfully handle increase without taking credit.
- Serving brings *security* and confidence. Those who serve well "gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith" [**1Ti 3:13**].
- God promises to *pour out his spirit* on His servants [**Ac 2:18, cf Mt 12:18**]. He wants to anoint us for the task!
- Serving God keeps us *refreshed and passionate!* Paul urges "never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord" [**Ro 12:11**].

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<sup>8</sup> Based on Tom Marshall, *Understanding Leadership*, pp71-73

- Jesus regards those who serve Him as His *friends* [Jn 15:13-15, Ex 33:11] and God *delights* in us when we serve Him [Pr 14:35].
- When we are examined, Jesus will use our servanthood as the litmus test of true and genuine conversion [Mt 25:31-46] and *reward us* accordingly.

Dynamic, chosen leaders share Christ's attitude of servanthood, and their greatest desire is to hear Him say: "Well done good and faithful servant" [Mt 25:21,23]

## 3 Dynamic Leaders: Gifted by the Spirit

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In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly...

**Romans 12:6-8**

**Dynamic leadership (by and of the Spirit) will therefore be characterized by a measure of *spiritual grace and gifting* which, in turn, will both cause and enable leaders to be joined in *fruitful, functional relationships* with others...**

### 3.1 Gifts & Graces

Appreciating and embracing the various gifts and ministries God has given to His church is vital if we are to participate in His programme and purpose. And we can helpfully consider the varying types of leadership and ministry simply as *expressions of God's grace*. As the apostles understood, every GIFT in the Body is an outworking of God's GRACE: "In his grace, God has given us different gifts..." [Ro 12:6] and "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" [1Pe 4:10].

### 3.2 What is Grace?

Grace is God's 'unmerited favour', His 'underserved blessing freely bestowed on man'. In the OT, 'grace' is the Hebrew *chên* meaning kindness, favour, charm or beauty. In the NT it is *charis* meaning 'graciousness of manner or act'; that which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or favour; it is graciousness, loving-kindness or goodwill generally. The meaning of *charis* comes from a Greek custom: when ancient Greeks wanted to give a gift out of pure generosity of heart, and without any thought of reward, they would call this gift a 'grace'.

Grace is the **undeserved, unearned and unmerited favour of God** bestowed upon men and is always God's initiative: God seeking man (not vice versa); God coming to us! Grace is His overwhelming response to our desperate need [Heb 4:16]. Grace bridges the gap between our lack and His abundance. It is "the overflow of God's total self-sufficiency. He has no deficiencies that we could remedy by our works, and so He cannot negotiate with us for some good we could offer. All we have is from Him and through Him and to Him...Grace is the overflow of God's free goodness and power and wisdom....When goodness comes

from Him, it comes freely. It can come no other way. Therefore all His goodness is grace.”<sup>9</sup>

The OT contains numerous manifestations of God’s gracious love towards mankind.<sup>10</sup> In the NT, grace is fully revealed: “the law was given through Moses; *grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” [Jn 1:17] who was Himself “*full of grace and truth*” [Jn 1:14]. Grace comes to us *from* the Father [Ro 1:7, etc<sup>11</sup>], *through* the Son [Jn 1:17, Ro 5:15, 1Co 1:4] and *by* the Holy Spirit - who is “the Spirit of grace” [Heb 10:29]. God is indeed “the God of all grace” [1Pe 5:10]

The ultimate expression of God’s grace is to save us from sin [Ac 15:11, Ro 3:24, Ro 11:5, Eph 1:6-7, Eph 2:5, 8, Titus 3:7]. But not only does grace save us at the start of our Christian lives, it is the means by which we are empowered for living every day [2Co 12:9]. The entire Christian life is to be lived ‘by grace’: Paul urged new converts “to *continue in the grace of God*” [Ac 13:43, cf Col 2:6]. Paul begins all his letters with “grace to you” and ends them all with “grace be with you”: grace starts and ends the NT teachings and ministry to the churches.

### 3.3 Grace and Leadership

It follows, therefore, that any service towards Christ and his Church is to be carried out *in and through grace*. Any calling, ministry, gifting and anointing, as leaders is a *result of grace*: the undeserved, unearned and unmerited favour of God; the overflow of His goodness. There is therefore no place for pride or boasting in leadership and ministry. We are called by grace, appointed by grace, equipped by grace, preserved by grace and strengthened by grace. As we serve God and His people it is *by grace* from beginning to end.

Paul never forgot that it was *by grace* he had been called into his ministry:

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But **by the grace of God I am what I am**, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

**1 Corinthians 15:9–10**

I became a servant of this gospel by the **gift of God’s grace** given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this **grace** was given me: **to preach** to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...

**Ephesians 3:7–8, and see also Galatians 1:15–16**

<sup>9</sup> John Piper: “*Grace to you and Grace with you*” at [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org).

<sup>10</sup> Adam’s fall brought grace not wrath from God, and the promise of atonement [Ge 15]; Noah “found favour [*chên*] in the eyes of the Lord” [Gen 6:8]; the Tabernacle, Feasts, Priesthood and Sacrifices all displayed expressions of grace - God’s goodness coming to meet our needs!

<sup>11</sup> Paul begins all of his letters with a message of “*grace from God the Father*”

Paul knew his salvation was undeserved, unearned and unmerited - and so was his call to ministry. Both were by the grace of God. Paul's *calling* was by grace, and it was by grace that he *outworked* it and fulfilled his ministry:

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles...

**Romans 1:5**

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation....

**1 Corinthians 3:10, ESV**

**Any leadership or ministry we have is God's grace-gift to us, and He alone can 'grace us' to outwork it successfully.**

### 3.4 Types & Measures

God's grace and gifting towards each of us varies. The differences may be in *type* of gift, or in the *'measure'* of grace or faith we have to function effectively.<sup>12</sup>

Firstly, the differences may be in the *type* of leadership, ministry or service God has called us to. The NT contains several descriptions of various gifts and graces:<sup>13</sup>

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully..

**Romans 12:6-8**

And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

**1 Corinthians 12:28**

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it [ESV: "according to the measure of Christ's gift"] ...It was he who gave

<sup>12</sup> The concept of measure [*Gk: mentron*] is evident in regard to (1) Rule [Lk 9:17]; (2) Grace [Eph 4:7]; (3) Gift [Eph 4:7, NASB]; (4); Faith [Ro 12:3,6]; and (5) Sphere of ministry [2Co10:13]

<sup>13</sup> Not here including the charismatic 'Gifts of the Spirit' of 1Corinthians 12:7-11

some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...

### Ephesians 4:7,11-12

In our leadership teams we should expect a broad range of gifts and ministries. As we recognise such gifts (and the grace that enables them) we must make space to “let them” function in the Body.

Secondly, there will be differences in the *measure or extent* of a gift. All prophets are not the same; all pastors differ in the extent of their gift; all small group leaders are different; each elder has a different measure... Paul demonstrates this in his epistle to the Romans. In **Ro 12:3** he writes: “*by the grace given me I say to each of you: Do not think of yourselves more highly than you ought...*” In **Ro 15:15** he says “on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, *because of the grace given me by God*”. Paul had a grace-measure that enabled him to say certain things effectively to the church and its leaders. Others (even other apostles) couldn't have said what he did (because of a different measure or relationship); but God enabled him to function in this particular way towards this particular people. This is the grace of God.

Upon Jethro's advice, Moses identified leaders over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens – *based on their measure* of capacity to lead [**Ex 18:21ff**]. Discerning our own measure of leadership gifting and anointing is essential if we are to function rightly in the Body. There is great liberty in knowing our own (current) gift and measure, and functioning at ease without comparisons!...

## 3.5 Grace to us and through us

In calling us and gifting us to serve as leaders in the Body, God is expressing His grace both *to us* and also *through us* to the church: through faithful stewardship and outworking of our gift, the Body is equipped, encouraged and built-up. Those gifted to lead and minister are *themselves gifts to the church* and an expression of God's grace towards us. Paul explains this as he talks about the ‘ascension gifts’ in **Eph 4**: grace has been given *to each of us* [**v7**]; gifts have been given *to (particular) men* [**v8**]; and these apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors/teachers have themselves been given *to the body of Christ* [**v11**] as gifts to the church.

## 3.6 Recognising Grace and Gift

So, how do we know what our grace-gifting is? The effective functioning of a gift of grace will be (or become) evident to ourselves and others. When Barnabas arrived in Antioch “he *saw the evidence of the grace of God*” [**Ac 11:23**]. From his conversion Paul knew he was “called by His grace” to be an apostle to the Gentiles [**Gal 1:15-16**]; and later James, Peter and John “*recognized the grace given to me*” to function in this way [**Gal 2:9**].



What does this evidence look like? How do we recognise God's grace in someone?

- There will be **fruit** from their leadership, gift or ministry – in Antioch grace Barnabas resulted in “a great number of people” turning to the Lord [**Ac 11:21**]; “the Lord’s hand was with them”. When God extends His grace towards someone’s leadership and gift there will be results!
- There will be a **generosity** about the person and their ministry [**2Co 8:1-2ff**]. Since grace is a manifestation of God’s overflowing kindness and generosity towards us, it follows that when someone is functioning in God’s grace, there will be a generosity in all that they do: that is, the goal of their serving and ministry will be to give good things to others. Grace-empowered ministry is always looking outwards; never drawing people to oneself.
- Holy Spirit **life, freedom and liberty** will result from the service or ministry. The Holy Spirit – “the Spirit of grace” [**Heb 10:29**] – always brings freedom [**2Co 3:17**].
- They will function in that area of service, or amongst those people, with a certain **ease**; that is, they will not be striving or straining to make something happen. There will be an ‘anointing’ upon them in that area of their lives – this is the grace of God!

### 3.7 Fruitful, Functional Relationships

Several crucial, *God-intended* consequence arise from all this:

- Firstly, it becomes essential that we’re *aware of our own type of gifting*. We need an accurate assessment of what we are and what we are not. We must not think of ourselves more highly (nor more lowly) than we should [**Ro 12:3**]. At best you’ll be frustrated and fruitless – and at worst you will die prematurely – trying to function in a ministry you’re not gifted in.
- Second, we also need an accurate *assessment of the measure of our gift*. Some pastors can lead churches of hundreds; other may lead churches of thousands. It’s impossible to succeed in a larger sphere than we’re gifted for; everyone has ‘God-imposed limitations’. Knowing our gift and measure brings great security and peace, and an end to striving. We stop trying to be what we’re not and begin to enjoy great fruitfulness being just what we are!
- Third, we must *recognize the gifting in others*. Secure in our own gifting, and set free from any competition or comparisons, we can rejoice in the way Christ has gifted others! In fact, sometimes it’s only when we relax in our own gifting that our eyes are opened to see the grace in others.

- Lastly, it becomes essential that we *draw upon the gifting of others*. Recognizing our own gifts and limitations, we realize that we can't be isolated and independent; we simply cannot be self-sufficient. We don't have everything our churches need – and if we want our churches to have all that they need we must draw up the gifting Christ has put *in others*!

### 3.8 Teams not Towers!

God has designed His church so that we *need* to work *in teams* of varying gifts. We must let everyone flourish in their own area of gift; we need to work together in *fruitful, functioning relationships* with others. Teamwork is essential in our ministry within the local church and across the wider Body:

- The NT speaks only of elders functioning *in a plurality*<sup>14</sup> [eg see **Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:2ff, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18, 1 Timothy 4:14, 5:17, Titus 1:5, James 5:14, 1 Peter 5:1,5**]; likewise deacons [**Phil 1:1, Acts 6:1ff** by implication].
- Eph 4 gifts functioning within and across the churches *in teams*. Peter and John ministered together [**Acts 3**]; Barnabas drew Paul into Antioch [**Ac 11:25ff**], where a group of prophets and teachers later emerged [**Ac 13:1ff**]; Paul never travelled alone, etc.

Notwithstanding the proper biblical role of God-ordained *government* in the church (residing primarily in Apostles and Elders), we must rigorously avoid all concepts of 'labels and ladders' and instead focus on the proper biblical emphasis on 'gifts and graces'. Church leadership is to be seen not as a *hierarchy*, but rather as *teamwork*; we must see things horizontally not vertically.

And although we recognize different 'measures' (of rule, grace, gift and faith), these exist amongst us to enable people to *play their part in the team* more effectively, not to elevate one above the other. We are on the same team, (playing on a flat pitch), but in different positions, according to our gifts. We don't look up/down but across at one another.

Eg, in a local church leadership team, Elders have a role in governing the church, Deacons in serving in particular areas, administrative staff in others, 'helps' in others, etc. The roles are different; the measures will vary; there should be proper biblical authority and submission [**Heb 13:17**] – but there is no 'hierarchy'.

Let's build 'teams not towers', where people serve because they're gifted in that area, and where different roles are not seen as better/worse, more/less important, but the emphasis is on the right people doing the right job.

This 'Divine Design' forces us to be interdependent; to honour and appreciate others. There is no place for independent, self-sufficient, lone leadership!

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<sup>14</sup> With the singular "elder" being used only to describe the characteristics required of each man personally

### 3.9 Stewardship

God expects us to be good stewards of His grace. Peter tells us that “as each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, *as good stewards of God’s varied grace*” [1Pe 4:10]. How can we do this?..

- By **not “missing it”** [Heb 12:15] – recognising what God has given.
- By **not receiving it “in vain”** [2Co 6:1] – with no result, effect or outworking.
- By **putting it to work** so that it grows - in keeping with the principles of stewardship: faithfully outworking our existing leadership entrustment results in glory to God and an enlargement of our responsibility [Mt 25:14-39, Lk 16:10-12, Lk 19:12-27]. Paul could say “by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them.” [1Co 15:10]
- By ensuring we **don’t abuse it** in any way [Ro 6:1, 6:15, Jude 1:4] – eg falling into sinful or legalistic ways, but continuing to function in and through grace. Any self-effort is a departure from grace [Gal 5:4].
- By **staying humble** at all times – God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble [Jas 4:6, Pr 3:34]
- By **staying strong** in the grace God has given us [2Ti 2:1] – remaining steadfast about God’s call on our lives.

As stewards of God’s grace, therefore, we are called to do that which we’re graced to do! (“if a man’s gift is...let him...”, Ro 12:6-8), and to do so BY GRACE!

## 4 Dynamic Leaders: Empowered by the Spirit

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My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power...

**1 Corinthians 2:4**

We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all His energy which so powerfully works in me.

**Colossians 1:28-29**

**Dynamic leadership longs and labours to see Christ formed in all God's people, being characterized by the dynamic powerful energy of the Holy Spirit...**

### 4.1 "Clothed with Power!"

During His time on earth with the Twelve, Jesus "gave them power and authority" at specific times to undertake specific assignments [eg **Lk 9:1ff**], but they lacked the abiding power that they saw at work through Him. The promise from the outset [**Mt 3:11**], however, was that they would be "clothed with power" and "receive power" when they were baptised in the Holy Spirit, and they were commanded to wait for it to happen [**Lk 24:49, Ac 1:4,8**].

After Pentecost, their ministry was characterised by mighty power [**Ac 3:12, 4:7, 4:33, 6:8**] resulting in healings, miracles, signs, wonders, and resurrections! They had received the impartation of Christ's power, and immediately realized that this was fundamentally necessary for all leaders in the church [**Ac 6:3**].

### 4.2 Same Spirit...Same Works!

By His 'self-emptying' [**Phil 2:7**], Jesus came into voluntary dependence on the anointing and enabling power of the Holy Spirit [**Lk 4:4-18, Ac 10:38**]. His healings, miracles, signs and wonders were performed not *as God*, but as a Man in right-relationship with the Father. God became man and (whilst retaining His deity fully) He *chose* to live with the same limitations - and possibilities - as every other man.

The implications of this are enormous! When we understand that Jesus's ministry and manifestations of power were the fruit of a Man in total surrender to the will of the Father and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, we begin to understand why it was that Jesus said we would do all that He did and more [**Jn 14:12**], and why it

was that He has full confidence in a Spirit-baptised church to complete His works on the earth [Ac 1:4-8]. There is “incomparably great power for us who believe” [Eph 1:19] because *we have the same Spirit as Jesus* [Ro 8:11] and now share in His divine nature! [2Pe 1:4] If not, then the example and promises of Jesus would be unattainable.

Jesus showed what was possible through one Man who was fully yielded to the Father’s will and knew the Spirit’s anointing without measure. And now He has hand-picked leaders who can experience the same dynamic anointing.

### 4.3 Defining Moments

Jesus began his public ministry “in the power of the Spirit” [Lk 4:14], but His empowering was preceded by defining moments alone in the desert. Successful public leadership and ministry will always be preceded by private victories in defining moments. Like Jesus, hand-picked leaders must settle certain heart-issues which touch the very core of our being.

Being “full of the Holy Spirit”, Jesus was “led by the Spirit” into the desert [Lk 4:1], where the devil’s three challenges allowed Him to settle three key defining issues which are relevant to all Christian leaders:

- “*Whose Resources?*” (“If you are the Son of God...tell this stone to become bread”, Lk 4:3). Like Jesus, we must decide whether we will live by sight or by faith; by bread alone or by the Word of God; by the natural or the Spiritual? We must settle the issue of whether we will seek to be successful in ministry by depending on the power of God’s Word and Spirit, or on our own wisdom, ability and experience?...
- “*Whose Glory?*” (“If you worship me it will all be yours”, Lk 4:6-7). Like Jesus, we must decide who we are serving? What is our goal? And whose glory are we after?<sup>15</sup> We must settle the issue of ambition and motive... God looks for devoted leaders who fear Him and possess a deep longing to see Him alone exalted, glorified and honoured.
- “*Whose Timetable?*” (“Throw yourself down from here...and let God command the angels to lift you up”, Lk 4:9) Like Jesus, we must decide that we will never force the hand of God, or strive for position or recognition, instead of waiting for Him to promote us in His timing.

Jesus settled the issues and established His boundary lines...and *only then* did He return triumphant from the desert “*in the power of the Holy Spirit*” [Lk 4:14], to declare publicly that the Father had *anointed him* [Lk 4:18] before going to Capernaum where people were “*amazed at his teaching because his message had authority*” (Lk 4:32, 36). Like Jesus, God’s power, anointing and authority will

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<sup>15</sup> A striking characteristic of the great Biblical leaders is their unwavering pursuit of the glory of God *for God’s sake!* Eg: As Moses pleaded with God to send His Presence with them (Ex 33), his overriding concern was that God should look good! He wanted God’s presence so that God would be honoured through His people! Similarly, as Joshua pleaded with God after Achan’s sin and its consequences (Josh 7), his concern was for the effect of their defeat on God’s own great name (7:9).

only accompany our leadership when we have settled these defining issues of the heart.

## 4.4 Life in the Spirit

Hand-picked leaders will do all they can to foster a deep and intimate ‘life in the Spirit’ – a relationship with the Holy Spirit in which we know Him as our closest Friend. Developing a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit means “abiding in Him”. If we are serious about this, then it may mean re-ordering our whole lives around the priority of intimate fellowship with Him.

A growing intimacy with the Holy Spirit will have a profound effect on our sensitivity to Him; we will soon begin to have a fresh appreciation of the things He loves and the things He hates. Hence, Paul instructs us not to “grieve the Spirit” (to cause great sorrow or distress, to inflict injury), and describes several things that do that:

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Ephesians 4:29-32**

We cannot allow our thoughts, words or actions to block up the river of life; we will never be clothed with Christ’s power if we do.

It’s impossible to overestimate how easily the Holy Spirit is grieved. Torrey wrote:

“He is a Person who loves us, a Person who is holy and intensely sensitive against sin, a Person who recoils from sin in what we would call its slightest forms as the holiest woman on earth never recoiled from sin in its grossest and most repulsive forms. And He sees whatever we do, He hears whatever we say, He sees our every thought, not a vagrant fancy is allowed a moment’s lodgment in our minds but that he sees it; and if there is anything impure, unholy, immodest, uncharitable, untrue, false, censorious, bitter, or un-Christlike in any way, in a word or thought or act, He is grieved beyond expression. This is a wonderful thought, and it is to me the mightiest incentive that I know to take a careful walk, a walk that will please this indwelling Holy One in every act and word and thought.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> RA Torrey, *The Holy Spirit: Who He Is and What He Does – How to know Him in all the Fulness of His Gracious and Glorious Ministry*, reprinted by Herald of His Coming, 1993

Dynamic leaders make it their aim to avoid everything and anything that grieves Him. Dealing with things as quickly as possible (“closing the gap”) will have a marked effect on our ability to hear God and move in the power of the Spirit.

## 5 Dynamic Leaders: Sustained by the Spirit

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Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

**Acts 9:31**

Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

**2 Timothy 1:14**

So keep at your work...Guard this precious thing placed in your custody by the Holy Spirit who works in us.

**2 Timothy 1:13-14, MSG**

**Dynamic leadership will be characterized by a faithfulness and fruitfulness that is only possible (but entirely possible!) if we allow the Holy Spirit to shape, strengthen and sustain us...**

### 5.1 The Tragedy of Saul

One of the saddest epitaphs in Scripture is that “the LORD was grieved that He had made Saul king over Israel” [**1Sa 15:35 also 15:11**].

Saul’s leadership had begun with such promise: he was “an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites – a head taller than any of the others” [**1Sa 9:2**]. God instructed Samuel to “anoint him leader over my people Israel” [**9:16**], and Saul was duly “anointed...leader over [God’s] inheritance [**10:1**] and “the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power” [**10:10**].

What happened in Saul’s heart and life to cause such downfall? We can identify several factors, which are common pitfalls for many who fail or fall in leadership. He was:

- **Presumptive:** Saul’s first (and fatal) mistake was to offer unauthorised sacrifices [**1Sa 13:8-14**], against Samuel’s specific instructions [**10:8**] and going beyond his authority and anointing [**cf Dt 12:5-14**]. He took matters into his own hands and disobeyed God by doing things his own way. And because he made excuses rather than acknowledging his sin, his kingdom was doomed from that moment. As leaders, we can never presume an anointing or an authority; and we can never simply do things our own way. We must follow clear instructions, wait for God and crave fresh anointing



and resources every day rather than attempting to lead in our own strength.

- **Precipitous:** Saul made an impulsive and foolish oath [1Sa 14:24], with disastrous consequences. As before, he acted in haste without waiting on God. As leaders, we must avoid ‘rushing-in’, acting hastily or emotionally, and must take time to know God’s will for our work.
- **Partially Obedient:** Once again, Saul failed to fulfil specific instructions [1Sa 15:3, 9], being “unwilling to destroy completely” the best of the Amalekite animals. Saul again made excuses for his sin, but Samuel simply stated that partial obedience amounts to disobedience in God’s eyes and that Saul’s actions constituted “rebellion”, “arrogance” and “rejection of the word of the Lord” resulting in his rejection as King [15:23]. As leaders, we must seek to fully obey every instruction and prompting of God. We must complete what we start and do all that He asks of us.
- **Proud:** Even having acknowledged his sin, Saul appeared more concerned with what others would think of him [1Sa 15:30]<sup>17</sup>. He had already set up a monument in his own honour [15:12]. As leaders, we must be very careful – especially when things seem to be going well! We must remain humble of heart and utterly dependant upon the grace of God. Leadership is stewardship not ownership: if we have the privilege of leading God’s people, then we must remain acutely aware that we hold everything on trust for Him. Pride comes before a fall.
- **Pressured by men:** Saul confessed that he had been “afraid of the people and so...gave in to them” [1Sa 15:24]. As leaders, we will frequently come under pressure to do what others want; but we must know what God has said and ensure a ‘fear of God’ determines our actions rather than a ‘fear of men’ which will always “prove to be a snare” [Pr 29:25]. Don’t allow yourself to come under the pressures of other peoples’ agendas, expectations, politics or preferences.

Saul’s tragic monarchy reminds us that true character is seen under pressure. Pride, self-effort and fear of man characterised Saul’s leadership, rather than humility, grace and the fear of the Lord. These are heart-issues.

Our ‘heart-condition’ will be the key to our leadership [Ac 1:24, Ac 8:41, Gal 2:6]. God looks for faithfulness [1Ti 1:12] and judges the heart motive of every ministry [1Co 4:1-5, 1Th 2:4]. Everything proceeds from the heart and will be determined by its condition [Pr 4:23]. Your heart-condition (grace v self-effort; humility v pride; fear of God v fear of man...) will affect every aspect of your future...so allow ‘invasive surgery’ to take place!

## 5.2 Leadership that Lasts

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<sup>17</sup> Saul wanted people to think that Samuel still supported him; Samuel’s agreement to go and worship with Saul may have been to avoid the consequence of a nation turning from the King before a successor had been appointed

Jesus has chosen and appointed us to bear “fruit that will last” [Jn 15:16]. Sadly, lasting fruitfulness eludes many; all too often the energy, excitement and high ideals of youth give way to one or more of a number of common leadership struggles or conditions later in life:<sup>18</sup>

- **Burn-out:** The result of busyness, over-commitment and pressures; often driven by the external demands of success or the internal desire to please; sometimes masked by apparent fruitfulness. Eventually emotional, physical, relational and spiritual depletion lead to burn-out.
- **Drop-out:** Discouragement, disillusionment and unfulfilled dreams lead leaders to leave the ministry or to find fulfilment in a peripheral area that eventually becomes central.
- **Level-out:** Reaching a plateau and ceasing to grow as a leader; this condition may be hard to ‘diagnose’ and may be the result of an inability to resolve life issues or questions or from circumstances preventing them from moving on.
- **Fall-out:** Often fuelled by unmet emotional needs or over-busyness, the leader succumbs to escapist sin (often involving money, sex, power or substance-abuse) in a desire to meet the sense of emptiness. Fall-out is either humiliatingly exposed for all to see, or else remains hidden and undiscovered but no less devastating as the leader battles with the increasing divide between their public and private lives.
- **Spread-out:** With a growing uncertainty about the focus of their ministry, the leader dabbles in an ever-widening array of activities. The growing lack of focus brings a rising sense of dissatisfaction: rather than following a path to greater clarity about God’s calling they spread themselves ever more thinly.

These scenarios are “often interlinked, creating a complex web of concerns fuelled both by unresolved character issues and life circumstances.”<sup>19</sup>

Bryn Jones wrote: “Thousands of godly men have been willing to pour out their lives for the flock, only to fall victim themselves because they did not guard themselves. Literally thousands of God’s ministers have wearied in ministry, become jaded in life, experienced turmoil in mind, been devastated in their domestic situations, and seen their churches decline and be destroyed because of their failure to guard themselves.”<sup>20</sup>

Jesus has hand-picked us to serve Him *for the rest of our lives*. It is only by working with the Spirit and *dealing with our character* that we make longevity in our leadership a possibility

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<sup>18</sup> See James Lawrence, *Growing Leaders: Reflections on Leadership, Life and Jesus*, The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2004, 48-49.

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence, *Growing Leaders*, p49

<sup>20</sup> Bryn Jones, *The Radical Church*, p123-124

## 5.3 Importance of Character

It's impossible to exaggerate the importance of godly character in ministry and leadership. Charisma without character leads to catastrophe. King David led God's people successfully because he "shepherded them with integrity of heart" as well as leading them with "skilful hands" [Ps 78:2].

Character is who you are when no-one else is looking; reputation is what others think you are, whilst character is what you *really* are. Noting that "leaders cannot rise above the limitations of their character", Maxwell identifies four of the high prices paid by leaders who lack the bedrock character to sustain them in success - *arrogance*, painful feelings of *aloneness*, destructive *adventure-seeking*, or *adultery*.<sup>21</sup>

Success in church leadership is measured differently than in any other sphere: "God measures achievement in terms of integrity, faithfulness, devotion and righteousness, qualities that do not always produce statistical impressiveness"<sup>22</sup>. One of the great tragedies in the church is the forsaking of Christian character for the sake of natural 'success'. God wants our churches to grow in quantity as well as quality; but He wants us to succeed without compromise. Our character matters to the Lord, to those we lead, to the watching world, and in the cosmic spheres: our conduct and character will lock or unlock blessing into the church...

## 5.4 Above Reproach!?!...

The standard against which elders (and by extension all leaders) are to be measured is extremely high - "above reproach" ("blameless") [1Ti 3:2] - but no higher than befits the servant of Christ, and steward of such "a noble task" [3:1]. The word used (*anepilempton*) means *living in a way that gives no reason for others to think badly of the church or the faith or the Lord* (the NLT translates it "a man whose life cannot be spoken against"). An important aspect of this "blamelessness" is the idea that no *ongoing* blame attaches to a man: if he does wrong he puts it right.

In measuring a man against these standards a number of *observable characteristics* are defined [1Ti 3:2-7, Tit 1:6-9]; it should be possible to judge a man's suitability for leadership by observing his marriage, his household and his family. What a man is and does in his private life has substantial consequences for the church.

- "The husband of one wife" - the emphasis being on faithfulness
- "Temperate" - mastering his appetites

<sup>21</sup> John C Maxwell, *21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader: Becoming the Person Others will want to Follow*, Thomas Nelson, 1999, p5

<sup>22</sup> James E Means, *Effective Pastors for a New Century*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1993, p123

- *“Self controlled”* and *“disciplined”* – over mind, body, and emotions, with a particular emphasis on sexual self-control
- *“Respectable”* – behaviour that warrants the respect of others
- *“Hospitable”* – beyond entertaining to expressing love; without undue demand for privacy
- *“Able to teach”*, and *“holding firmly to the trustworthy message”* – able to discern error, a solid grasp of doctrine
- *“Not given to drunkenness”* – avoiding anything which inhibits clear thinking
- *“Gentle”* and *“not quick tempered”* – reacting properly in challenging situations
- *“Not quarrelsome”* or *“overbearing”* – able to work as part of a team
- *“Not a lover of money”* and *“not pursuing dishonest gain”* – free from financial greed or anxiety, content in every situation
- *“Manages his own family well”* with *“children who obey him”* and *“believe”* – order at home, which is the proving-ground of leadership
- *“Not a recent convert”* – immune to pride
- *“Upright, holy”* – free from guilt and a lover of justice
- *“Good reputation with outsiders”* – able to withstand scrutiny

The nature and mission of the church are such that its leaders must be men and women of the highest standing. Paul isn't asking for perfection, but for a purity and wholeness that can be seen by others, and a willingness to put right any wrongs. The character requirements are designed to prevent leaders from falling victim to many of the common pressures and temptations they face.<sup>23</sup> The emphasis is on growth, maturity and progress; indeed, he instructs Timothy “train yourself to be godly” [1Ti 4:7] and to “be diligent in these matters...so that everyone may see your progress” [4:15].

## 5.5 Keep Watch...Be on Guard!

Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders was to “keep watch over yourselves” [Ac 20:28] – implying personal guardedness as well as a mutual accountability; both are prerequisites to keeping watch “over the flock”.

So, how can we stay on track and last the course? Three things in particular are keys for us:

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<sup>23</sup> Areas of vulnerability, where pressures, compromises or temptations are common may include: Marriage and family life (time, priorities), Propriety in counselling situations, Handling of finances, Relationships with fellow-leaders, Relationships with opposite sex, Motivation, Use of power and authority, Handling of stress and pressures, Alcohol and drug use, Pornography, Confidentiality, Travelling and accommodation, etc.

- Working in *partnership with the Holy Spirit* to guard our character provides a powerful preventative to these pressures. Taking quality time for prayer and reflection; regularly ‘retreating’ for an extended quiet time; allowing the Word to act as a plumb-line in our lives; asking the Holy Spirit to highlight flaws and give us power to change, etc.
- Effective, *accountable relationships* with our spouse and other leaders; inviting and embracing the intervention, correction, and feedback of trusted colleagues
- Above all, perhaps, a healthy ‘*fear of the Lord*’...

## 5.6 Fear of the Lord

God loves us...but He wants us to fear Him; His holiness demands it and His purpose requires it. The Greek *phobos* means a “reverential fear of God; not a fear of...righteous retribution, but a wholesome *dread of displeasing Him*; a fear which influences the disposition and attitude of someone whose circumstances are guided by trust in God, through the indwelling Spirit of God”<sup>24</sup>. The ‘fear of the Lord’ is therefore a *reverence*, a *respect and honouring* which *affects our disposition and attitude*. It’s the opposite of casualness, indifference, and over-familiarity. He is our Friend but He’s not our ‘buddy’.

Leaders must live with an abiding awareness of His holiness, His sovereignty, His zeal for His own glory and honour, His knowledge of the thoughts and motives of our heart, the fact that He’s coming back to judge the world, His right and prerogative to take us home whenever He chooses...

The Apostles understood this: “since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of *reverence [phobos]* for God” [2Co 7:1]; “since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in *reverent fear [phobos]*” [1Pe 1:17].

Dynamic leaders will “always be zealous for the fear of the Lord” [Pr 23:17].

The Fear of the Lord is always positive not negative: it brings wisdom [Pr 1:7, 9:10, 15:33]; adds length to life [Pr 10:27]; is a fountain of life [Pr 14:27, 19:23]; brings wealth [Pr 22:4]; allows God to confide in us [Ps 25:14]; brings provision [Ps 34:9] and blessing [Ps 115:13, 128:1] and leads to desires fulfilled [Ps 145:19]. Above all, “the Lord delights in those who fear Him” [Ps 147:11].

Early on in the story of its explosive growth, the Jerusalem church faced a crisis: an event that could have destroyed its testimony and halted its progress. Amidst a wave of generosity [Ac 4:32-37], Ananias and Saphira sold land and laid the proceeds at the apostles’ feet. But their falsehood had devastating consequences: both were taken by God instantly [Ac 5:1-11]. They had “lied to the

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<sup>24</sup> Vine’s definition

Holy Spirit” and tried to “test the Spirit”, demonstrating *a lack of fear of God*. Such a cancer could not be allowed to permeate the church; it had to be dealt with decisively and swiftly. It was a *kairos* moment. God’s judgement was necessary, and as a result “great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events” [5:11]. The Message puts it:

That put the fear of God into everyone!” [v5] “By this time the whole church and, in fact, everyone who heard of these things had a healthy respect for God. They knew God was not to be trifled with.

### Acts 5:11

It was vital that the fear of the Lord gripped the early church: He would not allow an attitude of casualness or indifference to His holiness creep into the Bride He is preparing for His Son.

We can maintain the highest standards of ethics and character by – first and foremost - *fearing the Lord*. It will mean we obey Him; we will be totally truthful; we will never be indifferent about sin; we will avoid temptations and compromising situations; we will be very careful with our words; and treat others with respect in every way; and we will never abuse His grace...

**Ac 9:31** tells us that “the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it *grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord*.” The Message says: “They were permeated with a deep sense of reverence for God. The Holy Spirit was with them, strengthening them. They prospered wonderfully.” May our churches prosper wonderfully as we lead dynamically, with a healthy fear of the Lord.