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What Makes a "Fit" Christian Leader?

1 Peter 5:3: (NASB) *nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.*



As a nation, we are facing what many say is one of the most important elections of our time. What people look for is someone to show them a pathway through difficulties, give them a vision for the future and be trustworthy. That is what leadership is all about. The question is, is that what Christian leadership is all about? What makes a really truly God-blessed Christian leader? Stay with us as we find out!

What is leadership?

John 21:15-17: Here is the first request for Christian leadership - Jesus is asking Simon Peter to lead Jesus' flock.

Defining a leader, Patrick Dixon

- *Look over your shoulder! If people are following you, you're a leader; if they are not, you aren't. It's as simple as that. Leadership comes from who you are, not from your position in life.*
- *You can put someone who is a mediocre leader and give them a big promotion and big hierarchal structure with all the people reporting in to all the other people and I promise you this, you will not turn him into a leader. You can have someone who exists nowhere on an org chart who is an informal adviser or a consultant who may be providing more leadership to your organization than anyone else, because leadership comes from within. Leadership is something given to a leader by those who follow.*

An overview of what leadership is: **1 Peter 5:1-9**

Never give in, Winston Churchill (1941)

- *Never give in! Never give in! Never, never, never! In nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in, except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force, never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy...*

A truly great spiritual leader will not make up his own rules, but will rely on the word of God.

What happens when leadership is bad?

The pronouncements against the 'shepherds of Israel' is very appropriate in defining *misuse of leadership*: **Ezekiel 34:1-6:** So, who has been the primary focus of the shepherds? Self! What was the motivation of the shepherds? Comfort and laziness! What was the result of the shepherds' efforts? A scattering of the sheep!

This is both bad news and good news. The bad news is that even in those ancient times when God's chosen people were a nation, there was serious corruption in their spiritual leadership. Good news? The good news is that this all-too-familiar corruption is not the sole property of Christianity, but is a shared darkness. (Hmmm...pretty weird "good news.")

Do we have scripturally fit Christian leaders today?

Mind Control Groups, Devil's influence, Geraldo Rivera

- *These extreme Fundamentalist preachers characterize anything or anyone that is outside of their ministry as being of the Devil or satanic. For example, if Debbie's mother came to her and tried to persuade her to leave the church because she was concerned about that organization and its hierarchy, Debbie would see her mother as under the influence of the Devil. The pastor would go so far as to say to many congregants like Debbie, if you doubt our doctrine, if you question in your mind through your own intuitive thinking what we are telling you, that isn't you thinking independently, you are under the attack of the Devil, the Devil is invading your mind.*

The Apostle Paul warned the Elders of Ephesus what was coming for them:

Acts 20:28-31: Again: wrong focus, wrong motivation and wrong result - both "from without" and "from within." These are leaders drawing followers to themselves and not to God.

1 Timothy 4:1-5: Some will be deceived by the very influence of Satan and be drawn away from true Christianity.



What qualifies a Christian leader?

First, a quick look at one of the things that qualified a great world leader:

))) Winston Churchill's Nazi foresight, londonbusinessforum.com

- *At a time when he was virtually the only person in frontline politics to argue this, he kept arguing it for at least eight years. He was not put off arguing it by the fact that he was written off as a "warmonger" and attacked in the press constantly and in the House of Commons, having his judgment questioned. Those years of wilderness was what gave him the moral power and force to demand the Premiership from the outgoing Neville Chamberlain in 1940.*

The Christian leader's approach would be a prayerful one and not one motivated by his own desire.

We will be glancing at 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and the revealing lists of what qualifies a Christian leader:

1 Timothy 3:1: (NKJV) *This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.*

1 Timothy 3:2-7: (NKJV) *A bishop then must be:*

- **blameless**, - *not arrested, i.e. (by implication) inculpable*

This means living an honorable life, following the law. (Of course this applies to the whole flock, as well!)

Philippians 2:15

- **the husband of one wife**,
- **temperate**, - *sober, i.e. (fig.) circumspect*

If you are competing, you wouldn't normally be restrained. But here it means to be restrained in all areas of your life so that you can really focus on the spiritual things.

1 Corinthians 9:25: (NKJV) *And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

There is a dramatic cost to leadership. Part of worthy leadership is being able to pay that cost on a constant basis without complaint.

- **sober-minded**, - *safe (sound) in mind, i.e. self-controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion)*

1 Peter 1:13

You are moderate in self and passionate in the grace.

- **of good behavior**, - *orderly, i.e. decorous:*

A good leader lives what Christianity ought to look like.

- **hospitable**, - *fond of guests*
- **able to teach**, - *instructive*

2 Timothy 2:15

According to John Maxell (leadership mentor), "You can love people without leading them, but you cannot lead people without loving them. Connecting with people continues by communicating with them."

- **not given to wine**,

Ephesians 5:18

- **not violent**, (*physical and verbal towards others*)

Titus 3:2

- **not greedy for money**,

1 Timothy 6:6-10



- **but gentle,**

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Jesus was very gentle but was firm when he needed to be.

- **not quarrelsome,**

2 Timothy 2:24: If you are in a position to be a Christian leader, the truth of the Scriptures should speak for itself.

- **not covetous,**

2 Peter 2:3



Five Levels of Leadership, *The Permission Level*, John Maxwell

- *Leadership is getting people to work for you when they are not obligated. Question: I have about five or six really good leaders. I want to bring one of them up to a whole new position. How can I know who is the best of the six leaders? Answer: What would happen if you took those six leaders, went into the community, and put each one in charge of a volunteer community project? The best leader of the six is one who can most successfully lead volunteers.*

Timothy was himself young, yet Paul entrusted him with the deep things of God and with significant leadership responsibility. Why?

Because he was mature in the spirit: 1 Timothy 4:12: Age isn't necessarily a factor if spiritual maturity exists. 1 Timothy 6:17-21: The foundation should be in spiritual things, not riches. 2 Timothy 4:1-4: In many cases, Christianity has been watered down to be a tool of the people - more social so that we feel good - rather than the truth of God.

Why do people follow leaders?



Mind Control Groups, pastor's authority, *Geraldo Rivera*

- *(A mother speaking after a young woman had been assaulted by a church official) I finally got her to go to the doctor, even though she was scared to death the pastor would find out. What instilled that awful fear in her? I really to this day do not understand it. The man had such an aura of power about him. He was so structured and so sure of himself that a young girl like that who needed some structure in her life at the time clung to it. She was so afraid. They told her that the Pastor was the only authority and I had no authority in her life anymore.*

We need to raise up those leaders around us who are spiritually sound. Christianity is not to make us happy and comfortable, Christianity is to be a living sacrifice. We aren't to seek physical comfort. If our leadership is guiding us in that way, we need to ask ourselves why we are sitting under such leadership.



Winston Churchill's resume of courage, *londonbusinessforum.com*

- *He was immensely morally courageous but also physically courageous. From his earliest days when he heard bullets whistle past his ear in the northwest frontier, he took part in a last great cavalry charge, he was captured and escaped from a POW camp. What people knew was that when Winston Churchill asked them for something in the second World War that required great physical courage, he was somebody who himself led from the front and was capable of demanding these things from people because they knew that he himself had that kind of courage.*

We follow those who live the example of what we want to be: Joshua 24:15

We follow because of their humility: Philippians 3:13: Paul continued to strive and point people to Jesus, not himself. That's the kind of leader we want to follow.

We follow because they show us the vision: Habakkuk 2:2-3

We follow because they show us how to live the vision: Philippians 4:4-9: Christian leadership takes incredible focus and the desire to do God's will.




Where should a Christian leader lead?

Away from ourselves: Romans 13:11-14: To truly get away from one's self, we must be able to see how to "put on Christ." If your Christian leadership is guiding you towards your physical desires, you have to ask yourself, is that really Christian leadership or is that something nice that I like?

The Apostle Paul leads by example towards the vision of self-sacrifice: Acts 20:17-24: The Apostle Paul leaves Ephesus, knowing he will never see them again. This is his final farewell. Paul gathered the leaders and lays out his track record of absolute service. He instructs them to lead by his example, because he will be absent.

God's influence directed Paul to Jerusalem and Paul knew he would be taken captive there. He did it because it was God's will. This was just like Jesus, who knowingly walked into an unfair trial. We ought to be following in Christ's footsteps, like Paul did. He gave the leaders a responsibility to serve, not to be served.

 **We shall fight on the beaches, Winston Churchill**

- *We shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with great confidence and strength in the air. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and we shall fight in the streets. We shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender!*

Philippians 1:21: (NASB) *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

With this in mind, how should we now lead in the absence of the Apostle Paul, who led in the absence of Christ? We are covenanted towards sacrifice.

Philippians 1:27-30: (NASB) ²⁷*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;* ²⁸*in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.* ²⁹*For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake,* ³⁰*experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

It's not about being dressed the best or being able to speak the best. Being a Christian leader is about being able to bring the body of Christ closer to their objective. Our leadership should be showing us how to *suffer for Christ's sake*.

Our leadership is required by God, and ought to be required by us, to put spirituality before everything else.

***So what makes a fit Christian leader?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!***