



What Makes a True Christian Leader? (Part I)

Matthew 20:26: (NASB) *It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant.*



Leadership - In today's world, it is one of the most important necessities of life and sadly it is one of the most absent aspects of life. Humanity needs leaders. We need leaders to show us a vision, to clear a path, to walk the path first and to thereby help us walk the path. Christians, just like humanity, need leaders as well. Sure, we have Jesus as the captain of our faith and sure, we have the Apostles, the twelve pillars of Christianity, but we also need those whose examples we can see, touch and relate to here and now, at the end of the age. So, what makes a Christian leader? Stay with us!

Leadership the Christian Way - Properly placing the pieces of the puzzle

The Personal Pieces #1: The Internal Puzzle

Principles: What are the core values that guide me?



Compelling vision, *Servant Leadership*, Ken Blanchard

- *One is what business are you in? You know, I mean, why are you even doing what you're doing? OK, second is: if you do a good job in your business what will happen? Where are you going? The third is what's going to guide your journey? What are your values? So, a compelling vision tells you who you are, what business you are in, where you're going, which is your picture of the future. Then third, what will guide your journey, your values? And then once that's set, then the fourth one kicks in, which is the first secret to the One Minute Manager, which is what, goals? Because goals tell people what I want you to focus on right now.*

So, he's talking about the four parts of a compelling vision. We are not talking about a business, but we are in the business of talking about the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are not in the business of the gospel of Jesus Christ to make money; we are in the business of the gospel of Jesus Christ to praise God with the way we live, the things that we say and the spreading of the word. If you do a good job, what's going to happen? What guides your journey? What are your values? Finally, what goals are you focusing on here and right now?

Leadership is action, not position.

Mark 12:28-31: Jesus is giving us the action of the internal development of leadership. What helps us to know what is right? Godly righteousness. Putting God first! This is the most basic principle we can adhere to! **Proverbs 4:23** **Psalms 78:72:** The common denominator in both of those scriptures is the heart. It is no accident that we are constantly told to guard our heart, for it is through the heart that all good or evil comes to rest upon our lives! **Philippians 4:7:** The internal part of leadership is guarding the heart with Godly righteousness. Principles: Love God with all your being. Guard the integrity of that love and learn to rest in its protection. These principles need to be driven by your heart. If they do not drive you, then you're not leading well.

Next, understand that true Christian leadership is expressed through action and not position. **Matthew 16:18:** The name "Peter" means, "rock." One of the traditional interpretations of this verse seems to indicate that Peter was to be the foundation of the Christian Church and therefore our leader. In some cases this leadership is believed to pass down through all the generations of Christianity. Is that what this Scripture is really saying? Within the Christian hierarchy is there a pre-determined approach with the Apostle Peter taking the lead above the other apostles? What does that Scripture really mean?

Peter: Strong's: #4074 Petros (pet'-ros); apparently a primary word; a (piece of) rock (larger than 3037); as a name, Petrus, an apostle: KJV-- Peter, rock. Compare #2786. Always translated "Peter"

So, in **Matthew 16:18**, Peter is a name - a given name which signifies a rock. Does this mean that Peter is the "rock" that the church was to be built upon and therefore the leader from which all other leaders would come from? *Absolutely not! Why?*



The text again: Matthew 16:18: (NRSV) *And I tell you, you are **Peter <4074>**, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.*

The word *rock* in this verse is slightly different:

New American Standard Greek Lexicon: Rock: #4073, *petra*; a (large mass of) rock NAS-rock (10), rocks (3), rocky (2).

So, how was this second word used elsewhere? *Peter literally means a piece of rock, a smaller rock, not a large mass of rock: Matthew 7:24: Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a **rock <4073>**. 1 Corinthians 10:4: And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual **rock <4073>** that followed them: and that **rock <4073>** was Christ.*

Peter is a rock, but is not the rock upon which the Christian church is built. Jesus is. What did Peter say? *Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.* The Apostle Peter agreed that he was simply one of the many leaders within the true church. 1 Peter 5:1-3: Christianity does have leadership built into it. How did the Apostle Peter view himself in terms of Christian leadership? He did view himself as a Christian leader. He was one of the twelve pillars of the Christian church. He was the outspoken spokesperson for the apostles. He played an enormously important role. Peter is saying to the others in 1 Peter 5:1-3, "I am just like you!" Peter tells them to feed the flock of God and do it because they *want* to do it. He shows us what the template of a true Christian leader ought to look like.

Additional principles for the Christian leader to apply, first within themselves: Abide by scriptural truth and do all with humility and zeal.

Trust, *The Essence of Leadership*, Colin Powell

- *My question is: How you would define the key characteristics of effective leadership that allow you to go and be an advocate for good?*
- *Trust. The longer I have been in public service and the more people that ask me about leadership over the years; leadership ultimately comes down to creating conditions of trust within an organization. Good leaders are people who are trusted by followers. Leaders take organizations past the level that science of management says is possible. One of my sergeants back in the infantry school at Fort Benning, almost 50 years ago, which is where I learned everything I ever got to learn about leadership, was at the infantry school. And he said to me one day, he said: "Lieutenant! You'll know you are a good leader when people follow you, if only out of curiosity."*

The Personal Pieces #2: The Internal Puzzle

Priorities: What are the "most important things," the "True North" that I focus on?

A compass always goes back to True North. Our leadership ought to always be going back to True North. Can we observe that in our Christian leaders? Can we observe that in ourselves if we suddenly find ourselves going in the wrong direction? Are you able to take out your personal compass and say, "okay, it's time to refocus, time to go this way...towards God...True North?"

2 Peter 1:4-8: (NASB) ⁴*For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.* ⁵*Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence (your faith is the basis and upon that basis, now you must supply moral excellence. Leadership priorities are being described here.), and in your moral excellence, knowledge (it's great to have moral excellence, but you have to build knowledge upon that which you believe is right and correct.),* ⁶*and in your knowledge, self-control (based on the knowledge, you have to be able to be disciplined in the application of that knowledge so you can continue following the True North), and in your self-control, perseverance (pushing forward and not stopping), and in your perseverance, godliness (it's great to persevere, but how are you doing it?),* ⁷*and in your godliness (It goes back to righteous Godliness), brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love (we can be Godly and ignore our brother. You can be so focused and have tunnel vision. Don't have tunnel vision).* ⁸*For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge*



of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Priority:** To build a sound and spiritual inner man. These priorities from 2 Peter 1:4-8 will help you build a sound and spiritual inner man. Do all things to honor and glorify God. That's how we find our true Christian priority.

John 4:31-34: **Priority:** To find ones nourishment in the service of God's will through self-sacrifice.



Law of intentionality, Interview with John Maxwell

- *Well I am going to talk about the Law of Intentionality. The Law of Intentionality basically just says growth doesn't "just happen." So, I have observed many people who they just somehow think that if they just get up every day and go to work that they will grow automatically. And I know that problem because as a young person, that's what I felt. Until I had a man literally intersect my life and ask me what my plans for personal growth was, Mike, I didn't have a personal growth plan and didn't have a clue and I kind of stammered around a little bit. And then he told me. He said, "Growth is not an automatic process. You are going to have to do this intentionally." So I am going to talk about intentional growth.*

Grow on purpose! You have to work at it. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. We learn some of our best lessons from some of the mistakes we make in life. Growth means that you are going to a place you have never been before. 1 Corinthians 9:16-19

Priority: Preach - spread the Gospel of our own free will! Apostle Paul preached from the heart. He considered it a privilege. His reward was not to be supported by his brethren. He chose to serve the brethren. He wanted it to be a free gift. His focus was on the Gospel. That is true Christian leadership! Joseph was a great example. The key is God's guidance in our life. 1 Timothy 5:8 **Priority:** Provide that which is necessary for those who depend upon you. Take care of your family! Take care of the things that must be taken care of first, and that is your *True North*. Ephesians 5:25-29 **Priority:** Love your wife as Christ loves the church! Take care of that which is entrusted to you. *The two shall become one flesh.* John 13:12-17 **Priority:** Serve the brotherhood with all humility! Jesus is showing them another priority of leadership. He showed them the example of taking care of the brotherhood by washing the Apostle's feet. What a great example of the priority of Christian leadership! 1 Peter 5:2: **Priority:** Feed the flock!

The Personal Pieces #3: The Internal Puzzle

Performance: What am I doing and how am I doing it right now?

Think about Jesus. He had physical human needs. He needed to rest and regroup. How many times in the scriptures did he try to go off and rest and the crowds would find him? Every time he would turn and have compassion on them and he would heal them. It didn't matter how tired he was. He always showed ever-present selfless benevolent love. Are we working on showing this quality in our own lives?

Honor people and they will honor you. Fail to honor people and they will fail to honor you.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-24: The Apostle is telling us: Brethren, those who have honored you by serving you, by teaching you, by feeding you the Gospel, by giving you direction, you need to honor back. They are doing it out of love. He is breaking it down in terms of **performance**.

1 Thessalonians 5:14-24: With eyes wide open are you acting as a wise guide to the flock? Look and act! It is part of personal **performance**. What am I doing right now? ¹⁶*Rejoice always*. Do you have your mind ever set on seeing experiences from God's perspective? Everything God allows into our lives is for our good. Therefore, it is a reason to rejoice. Hebrews 12:11 1 Thessalonians 5:17-19: Is your spiritual mind continually re-charging? Prayer is the best way that we can re-charge. ¹⁸*in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*. To live thankfully is to fulfill God's will. Can others SEE the thankfulness of your life? ¹⁹*Do not quench the Spirit*. Are you listening for the spirit in you AND in others?

1 Timothy 4:11-16 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21: In your listening are you discerning as well? Don't just bide your time so that you can talk. Really listen! Others tend to follow you more readily if they know you are listening to them. 2 Timothy 2:15: We are talking about Christian leaders,



but this applies to everyone. Every one of us is a leader. 1 Thessalonians 5:22: Do you have a firm two-handed grip on righteousness? Isaiah 33:14-15

A simple leadership test: Turn around and see if anyone is following.

Are you working towards all of these things in your present **performance**? If so, there is a great promise waiting for you: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24: What a privilege to be set completely apart from the rest of the world for God's purpose! One last **performance** reminder - Revisiting a Priority: Serve the brotherhood with all humility! John 13:12-17: And how did Jesus do them? Jesus is saying, let us take that priority and apply it to **performance**. If you know these things, it is wonderful, but you are blessed if you do them! That is the **performance** of leadership. 1 Corinthians 13:2: The Apostle is telling us you can do these things in terms of **performance**, but having love is part of the **performance** equation. Love is not a feeling. Love is an action. Love is part of the **performance** of a true Christian and leader.

The Personal Pieces #4: The Internal Puzzle

Potential: What am I growing towards and how am I feeding that growth?

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act but a habit.

Excellence is usually elusive. It is most often only attainable as part of a journey to stretch one's self beyond one's present *perceived* capacity...this is how we develop **potential**! Matthew 5:43-48: Here is excellence. Love your enemies! Be willing to give to them with no thought of getting back. Jesus didn't just die for good people. He died for everybody. To truly love one's enemies is a major step towards godliness...The greatest **potential** that we should strive for is to truly love our enemies. **This is what Jesus did**: Romans 5:6-8: This was awesome! This is the love of God that He sent Jesus. God was willing to send Jesus and Jesus willingly and freely died. So, we see the ultimate growth **potential** is to love one's enemies. What about all the other areas of your life? If you are a leader, are you supposed to do everything well?

Find those things that the Lord has given you to use in his service and go for them.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31: Good news! This text is telling us that we have an abundant space to grow into! God judges us on the content of our character, not the content of our resume. Our **potential** therefore, is not out of our reach!

Ephesians 4:11-16: Notice - all these positions are for the purpose of creating a "mature man," a collectively complete individual called the Body of Christ and not mature men plural, each standing on his own! Growing up in Christ, even for leaders, is to grow into a strong functioning part that contributes its value mightily to the whole!

The lesson: Finding and growing towards your **potential** should not be a lonely road! We all have **potential**. Look in the mirror and see if you are focusing on the potential that God has given you.

Hebrews 12:1-3: **Potential** demands that we run! This is an admonition given to every individual Christian. **Potential** demands that we see the prize! **Potential** demands that we focus and meditate on that which gives us strength.

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