

Why Is It So Difficult to Be a Leader Today?

Leadership is so difficult today. Why is that? Many people think about leadership as a technique when in fact, at its core, it is who you are. It is ethics, living in such a way that leadership happens. So many leaders in the church stumble over this basic truth by living a life that is inconsistent with biblical principles and their own convictions, either publically or privately. For its part, the church has often missed the role of discipleship in nurturing spiritual leaders who can not only lead people but do so as mature disciples. This workshop will focus on how to guide leaders towards right living and build that into the normal discipleship ministry of the church.

Nikolay (Nik) Nedelchev, Ph.D., is Ambassador at Large for Entrust, an international pastoral training organization providing on-site theological education to men and women worldwide. He is also President of the Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance. Nik was born in Petrich, Bulgaria, in 1949. Though his parents were believers, Nik did not become a follower of Christ until the age of 21. He was disciple by Vassil Angelov, a Bulgarian who had graduated from Wheaton College and Dallas Theological Seminary and was supported by College Church in Wheaton. After Angelov passed away in 1972, Nik was asked by his church leadership to begin preaching and teaching. In 1973, Nik was ordained in the Baptist Union of Bulgaria and served as a traveling preacher and teacher. He later served as an assistant pastor and later, from 1989, as senior pastor of the Baptist Church in Sofia. He also took responsibility for the Baptist Union of Bulgaria. Nik was an avid student and vital participant in organizing secret pastoral training groups for Entrust – then known as Biblical Education by Extension, International (BEEI) – under the communist regime in Bulgaria in the 1980s. He successfully completed Entrust’s Advanced Theological Studies program and in 2000 was awarded an honorary doctorate by Philadelphia Biblical University. Nik was one of the founders of the Bulgarian Biblical Academy, Logos – later United Theological Faculty/Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute and now Saint Trivellii Bible School – serving as its executive director until 2006. He served as president of the European Evangelical Alliance from 1999 to 2007. Nik’s vision is to take the gospel throughout Bulgaria, the Muslim world, and the Middle East and to train the new generation of Christian leaders.

I. Leadership is difficult today!

A. It is only if we understand the real meaning of the Biblical leadership.

1. It is not a position, but core.
2. It is not education, but character!
3. It is not knowledge, but relationship with God and people.
4. It is not developing and communicating skills only, but showing a model to follow. (1 Thessalonians 1: 5-7)

B. It is not what you do or pretend to do – **but it is who you are.**

1. Dr. Billy Graham once said, “Do not tell me what you want to do or what you have done, I want to see what person you are and how you behave in your everyday life.”
2. The leader you are depends on the models of leaders you follow!
3. Communism has been gone in Central and Eastern Europe for 25 years, but still the style of leadership is totalitarian, authoritarian, one man show.
4. The standards and model are secular and not biblically-based.

C. Morals and ethics are more important than the pretension of success.

1. Leaders love to be on stage, on the platform, in the first place
2. The model of Barnabas – to play the role of second person is not popular today.
3. The leaders are not open to team leaders and leaders, but individual HEROES!
4. The standard of living, by copying the Western and American style, homes, cars and other things is a stumbling block for Christians and non-Christians.

D. The church has often missed the role of discipleship in nurturing spiritual leaders who can not only lead people, but do so as mature disciples.

1. The leaders are made, not born.
2. Every generation need a well-developed system of training and mentoring new leaders?
3. The young generation needs to see models to follow and to be accepted, to be given the opportunity and the environment to grow, and the chance to exercise their gifts and talents.
4. Here the roll again of the mature mentor is one of the most important components.
5. Trust the young leaders and forgive them and encourage them when they make mistakes and stay along-side them when they struggle.

II. WHAT IS DIFFICULT FOR US IS NOT DIFFICULT/IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD

- A. Creating the best spiritual, physical and emotional atmosphere for developing the next generation of leaders
1. New leaders need us as patient mentors and good biblical models who follow Jesus.
 2. Work along-side the new leaders, stay with them, pray with them, be their best friend and accountability partner.
 3. Travel with the new leaders, organize team-building retreats, parties and have fun with them.

B. IT IS NOT ONLY DIFFICULT TODAY TO BE A LEADER, BUT IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN IN BIBLICAL AND HUMAN HISTORY

1. There are not many excellent examples of Biblical, God-fearing leaders in the Old and New Testaments.
 - a. Moses, Joseph, Joshua, Nehemiah, Daniel, Barnabas, Paul, and Timothy
2. Let us encourage and never discourage the young generation of leaders.
3. Let us be less critical and build them up with love.
4. Let us correct them by being with them, not against them.
5. Let us pray never to judge them, but pray and support them.

Suggested Readings:

1. Maxwell John. *Developing the Leader within You!* Thomas Nelson, 1993.
2. Drucker Peter F. *The Practice of Management.* Harper Business, 1993.
3. Gangel, Kenneth O. *Team Leadership in Christian Ministry.* Moody Press, 1997.