

## **Leadership in a Fallen World: The Vices and Virtues of Leadership**

Western culture has shifted from viewing work as vocation and for survival to a vehicle for self fulfilment. Christians, albeit perhaps inadvertently, have allowed themselves to be “squeezed into the mould of the world” This can result in us failing to face up to the reality of our own fallen nature and the struggle against the vices and temptations particularly prevalent in leadership. We have at times let ambition, pride and self-seeking override the decision making process and influence our dealings with colleagues, staff and church members. One manifestation of this in the church is the rise of the CEO style pastor.

How should we deal with the impact of fallen human nature in our colleagues and cultural values that clash with Christian values? What are the temptations in leadership? When a colleague’s behaviour threatens us or the organisation, how should we respond? What are we called to do and be as leaders? What constitutes success in an organisation? What are the costs of following Christ as a leader? How do we stay on track?

The session will take a hard look at the realities for Christian leaders operating in both the church and Christian organisations and will set a challenge for us to recognise the vices of leadership within ourselves and others and to counter with the virtues that flow from following Christ.

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### **I. Defining Reality and the Vices of Leadership**

#### **1) The Impact of the Fall**

- a. For Christians in leadership the challenge we face is failing to properly recognise that we lead in a fallen world
- b. Impacts not just unbelievers we lead but OURSELVES
- c. Failure to wrestle with and understand this challenge can result in disillusionment or failure in leadership or simply a faith/work disconnect

#### **2) Desire for moral autonomy since the fall**

- a. Impacted relationships
- b. Community
- c. Dominion

*Romans 7:14-25 “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.”*

### **3) Self Interest**

- a. The reality of leadership today is that we operate in a world dominated by self interest, the pursuit of power and prestige, greed - where enough is not enough

## **II. Cultural Changes – impacting Christian leaders**

### **1) Identity culture**

- a. The West has moved from survival culture to an identity culture – it’s about me and my career
  - i. True in business, public life and regrettably also at times in church and para church leadership
  - ii. 15 years at board level, experience shows:
    - 1. Outward veneer of gentlemanly behaviour, integrity
    - 2. When push comes to shove, egos take over – what’s in it for me, how can I come out best, how can my position be enhanced?
      - a. Self-interest often lies behind the decision making process
      - b. We protect self rather than integrity

### **2) Ambition – confronting the reality**

- a. The problem is not just out there!

- i. Not only do we need to deal Christianly with colleagues and staff in the face of this reality in them
  - ii. Need to confront our own sinful desires
  - iii. If we're honest we're all ambitious – but at what cost?
- b. We need to be brutally honest with ourselves – we also as Christian leaders can be tempted and indeed fall into sin.
- c. We have allowed the values of the age to creep into the Church and into leadership.

*Rom 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

- i. Subtly driven by the worlds values because they seem attractive and separate from that which underlies them
  - ii. Even Church/Para Church Organisations judge success by the same measures as the world – strive for same outcomes:
    - 1. Profit
    - 2. Prosperity
    - 3. Growth
    - 4. Standing amongst colleagues

### **III.A Biblical Worldview**

#### **1) Calling in the bible**

- a. To become children of God
- b. To be holy – God's people in life
- c. To serve in the Church and in the world
  - i. Creation mandate
    - 1. Relationship – with God
    - 2. Community – with others (wife, family etc) strength of

many non-western cultures such as African

3. Subdue the earth – steward – act as a king caring for
  - ii. Jesus’ and the Apostles example
- d. To engage in “The Mission of God”
  - i. Need to re-emphasise in church
  - ii. Holistic Mission in the world where God has placed us

#### **IV. Spiritual Warfare**

##### **1) Leaders are at war – in a spiritual battle**

- a. Satan attacks the Church and Christian organisations
  - i. Divide and conquer
  - ii. Marriage
  - iii. Sinful desires
  - iv. Undermining ethics
- b. Many outstanding leaders had a tough time
  - i. Wilberforce is a good example
    1. Didn’t abolish slavery overnight
    2. Faced a lot of opposition

##### **2) Know yourself**

*Rom12:2-3 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”*

- a. How well do you know yourself?
- b. What drives you?

- i. Bigger church/organization
  - ii. More money
  - iii. Status
  - iv. Control
- c. Do you know your strengths AND weaknesses
- i. Your flash points
  - ii. What are you doing about these weaknesses?
- d. What about our personality?
- i. Do you manipulate others to get what you want?
  - ii. Do you like to control everything?
  - iii. Do you micro manage?

## **V. Virtues of Leadership**

### **1) Be leaders of character**

- a. Put simply we need to put on the virtues of Christ
- b. we can learn many useful things about leadership & management technique
  - i. People skills, Planning, motivating staff etc, etc
- c. Ultimately it is CHARACTER that will count before God
  - i. Character rather than success as measured by the world
  - ii. The reality of senior management is that often we are confronted by situations, crises without time to reflect or consult the handbook!  
This is the time character counts
    - 1. Are our values well formed
    - 2. Are we in fellowship with Christ

A FORTUNE article on “what it takes to be great” by Geoff Colvin states “*top performers in any field from Tiger Woods & Winston Churchill to Warren Buffet*”

*& Jack Welch are not determined by their inborn talents. Greatness doesn't come from DNA but from practice and perseverance honed over decades"*

- iii. Many in the world argue that what a leader does in private life doesn't matter
  - 1. Isn't that where character is also displayed
  - 2. Why would we trust a man who is unfaithful to his wife?

## **2) Follow biblical models**

- a. God often took ordinary men & women
  - i. Moses – felt ill equipped
  - ii. David succumbed to temptation
  - iii. Solomon accumulated wealth beyond that proscribed in the law
  - iv. Peter was arrogant “I will never forsake you Lord”
- b. Yet also see character emerging in ordinary people
  - i. Take Joshua – tricked by Gibeonites into a treaty
  - ii. Yet would NOT renege on the deal
  - iii. Despite perhaps ideal opportunity to undo the treaty as surrounding kings sought to attack their city
- c. They weren't perfect, they had flaws just like us
- d. Aspects of character
  - i. Someone who is walking with God
  - ii. Obeying God rather than man
  - iii. Integrity – standing up for principles you know to be right
  - iv. Acknowledging failure before God
    - 1. but also when appropriate to colleagues

v. Accountability a bible theme – direct challenge from God, prophets - men He sends.

1. Who are you accountable to?

a. Find a mentor or peer to share with

b. Eg breakfast group

e. Servant leadership – putting others first

i. Humility

ii. Self-control, discipline and reserve

1. Often doesn't come naturally to leaders

2. Eg response in anger

iii. Honesty

1. Do we bend the facts to suit?

## VI. The place of suffering

### 1) Character often formed through suffering and trials

*James 1:2-4*

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

*Hebrews 12:5-6 & 11*

5 My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.

11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

### 2) Will character ensure success?

- a. In worlds terms - possibly not always
- b. Can be a high price to pay
  - i. Perhaps reason why many compromise
- c. Under Old Covenant God often blessed obedience with prosperity
  - i. But not promised under new covenant
  - ii. What God requires is obedience and faithfulness
    - 1. In spiritual capital what counts is relationships
      - a. With God
      - b. With our neighbour/colleagues/staff