

Developing Servants Who Lead

**Growing Christian Leaders Series
Manual 7**

by
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The “Growing Christian Leaders Series” is the result of weekly topics which were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In these verses, Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God-given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world, people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Success produces rewards until we die, but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.’” 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The Growing Christian Leaders Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1. What Is A Servant Who Leads?

In Mark 10:42-45, we read, “But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” In these verses, we see that Christ reverses the order of leadership from that of the world. Christ said that the one who wants to become great becomes a servant. The one who desires to be first becomes the slave of all. That will be the focus of our topic today.

The word that is translated “servant” is the Greek word “diakonos”. It speaks of one who carries out the commands of another. It spoke of one who was doing service. In the New Testament, the word is used in a variety of ways. The most common uses for Christians deal with our service for Christ and our service to one another - both physical service and service through preaching and teaching. This word views a servant in relationship to his work.

The word that is translated “slave” or “bondslave” is the Greek word “doulos”. In the Greek society, a slave had no rights. Christ used this word to speak of one who gives himself to another's will. It speaks of one who is so devoted to another that he disregards his own interests. Christ used it to speak of those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing His cause among men. Christ became the perfect example of the meaning of the word when He came to serve and give His life a ransom for many. This word views a servant in relationship to his master.

In these verses, we see that godly leadership avoids certain things and includes certain things. We see that:

Godly leadership does not include lording it over others

Godly leadership does not include exercising authority over others

Godly leadership does include serving other Christians

Godly leadership does include becoming a bondslave to Christ by carrying out His ministry to all

First, we see that a servant who leads is not one who lords it over others. The word that is translated “lord” speaks of one who brings others under his or her power and control. In the world, people love to control others. However, we see that godly leadership avoids trying to control others or bring others under their power. Paul warned the elders of Ephesus of the danger of such leaders in Acts 20:30, “Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” This verse shows us that leaders who try to control are actually trying to draw away people after themselves rather than teach them to follow the Lord.

John warned of such leaders when he talked about domineering Diotrephes the dictator, in 3 John 9-10, “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.” Diotrephes was so eager to have control that he did several things. He:

Spoke evil of those who did not agree with him

He refused to accept those who did not agree with him

He forbid everyone else to accept those who did not agree with him

He put people out of the church who accepted those who did not agree with him

Peter explained what we are to do instead of trying to lead by controlling others in 1 Peter 5:3, “Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” We are to lead, by example, those who are entrusted to us. This means that a key way a servant leader leads is to lead

by example. Paul, Silas, and Timothy said, in 1 Thessalonians 2:10, “You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe.” In this verse, we see that these men provided an example of godly character to show Christians how to walk. The opposite of lording it over others is providing an example of godly character for others to choose to follow.

Second, we see that godly leadership does not include exercising authority over others. In Matthew 28:19, we see that all authority has been given to Christ both in heaven and in earth. In Philippians 2:5-11, we see that Christ humbled himself by becoming a man. Then, He humbled himself even further by becoming obedient to death on the cross. The word that is used, in Mark 10:42, shows that leaders in the world want to exercise power over others and tell them what to do. Since we are to follow the example of Christ, instead of telling others what we to do, we are to show them by a humble example.

Christ showed the disciples the perfect example of humble service when He washed their feet the night before He was crucified, in John 13:2-17. In John 13:13-17, Christ said, ““You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”” In these verses, we see that:

Christ is the One who is Lord

Christ gave us an example to follow

Christ said we are to do as He did

Christ said we are not to exercise greater authority than He had just exercised

Christ said we will be blessed if we lead by humble service

Third, we see that godly leadership does include serving other Christians. Part of our inheritance from Adam, that controls every person before he or she becomes a Christian, is the fact that every person is motivated by separation from God, fear, guilt, shame, and blame – Genesis 3:7-13. We serve Christians by helping them learn to move from:

separation from God to relationship and fellowship with God and with other Christians –

Romans 8:14-17; 1 John 1:3-7

fear to love – 1 John 4:18

guilt to forgiveness, cleansing and forgiving others – Acts 26:18; 1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:32

shame to acting as new creations in Christ – 2 Corinthians 5:17

blame to taking responsibility for our choices and actions and learning to act in the power of the Holy Spirit– Galatians 5:13; Romans 6:13-16; Luke 24:49

We serve other Christians by helping them to discover their choices and consequences and then encouraging them to pray that the Lord will lead them to make wise choices. We also serve other Christians by equipping them for the work of the ministry – Ephesians 4:11-13.

Fourth, we see that godly leadership does involve becoming a bonds slave to Christ. Paul begins the book of Titus by calling himself a bondservant of Jesus Christ. He begins the book of Philemon by calling himself a prisoner of Christ Jesus. In Philemon 8, we see that because Paul was an apostle he had the authority to command Philemon. However, in verse nine we read that, “*yet* for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.” Because Paul viewed himself as a bonds slave of Christ, he chose to appeal to Philemon. In the same way, a servant who leads is one who appeals to other Christians in love, rather than giving them commands to obey.

As bonds slaves of Christ, we are to be obedient to Christ and obey His commands. A servant who leads:

teaches other Christians the commandments of Christ
provides other Christians an example of how to obey the commands of Christ
serves other Christians by helping them reverse the effects of original sin
serves other Christians by equipping them for the work of the ministry and
serves other Christians by appealing to them in love
May the Lord richly bless you, as you are becoming a servant who leads.

2. A Servant Who Leads by Godly Character

Since a godly servant leader is one who leads others rather than driving them, people will only follow him if they see godly character in his or her life. A person can deceive others by being one thing when others are around and something else when he is alone. However, a servant who leads by godly character demonstrates the same character when only God is watching as he does when other people are watching. It is this consistency of character, whether alone or with others, that causes others to look to him for leadership.

We will look at five levels of leadership in the move from worldly leadership to godly leadership. As we do this, you will see that godly character has a greater impact at each level because we are moving from being a driver to a servant who leads. Notice the five levels as we move down in our leadership and become a servant who leads:

Power or position ***Rights***

People follow you because they have to.

“You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.” - Mark 10:42

Production ***Results***

People follow you because of what you have done for the organization.

“For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.” - Galatians 1:13-14

Permission ***Relationships***

People follow you because they want to.

“From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, ‘Will you also go away?’ Then Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’” - John 6:66-68

Personal development ***Reproduction***

People follow you because of what you have done for their development.

“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to be great among you shall be your servant.” - Mark 10:44

Personhood ***Respect***

People follow you because of who you are and what you represent.

“And whoever of you desires to be great shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” - Mark 10:44-45

As we grow in integrity and godly character, we are becoming more like Christ. This means that we also begin to lead more like Christ. Because He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, the disciples chose to follow Christ even when it meant death for them. When threatened by the religious leaders, we see the answer of Peter and the other apostles, in Acts 5:29. “But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’” After the religious leaders beat them, Acts 5:41 says, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” The apostles followed the example of Christ because of their respect for Him.

Paul and Silas showed a similar attitude, in Acts 16:22-25. “Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with

rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” Paul and Silas could sing hymns of praise, because they were depending on Christ and following His example.

The example of Paul and Silas caused others to follow their example. Later that night, we read, in Acts 16:30-32, “And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.” The jailer saw, and heard, the example of Paul and Silas in their suffering and realized that their lives were different. As a result, he and his entire family were drawn to Christ that night. The Lord used their godly character to draw this entire family to Christ.

In the same way, the Lord uses our character to draw others to Himself. However, we need to realize that some will rebel before they come to Christ. That was true of Paul. In Acts 6:9-7:60, Saul was one of the leaders of those who opposed the preaching of Stephen. Acts 7:59-8:1 tell us, “And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

The only way Saul could resist the impact of the character of Stephen was to try and show that he was the exception by persecuting the entire church. Instead of destroying the church, the Lord used the character of Stephen, and the other Christians, to draw Saul to Himself. Stephen became a servant who was obedient to death, because he was willing to follow the example of Christ. Later, Paul followed that same example. Here, we see the power of godly character to transform the lives of others.

In Acts 27, we see another example of how Paul led by his character. In that chapter, Paul was a prisoner on his way to Rome. In verses 23-25, Paul said, “‘For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, “Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.” Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.’” Paul was a prisoner with no authority but he spoke for the Lord.

Later, before morning came, Paul told the centurion and soldiers, in Acts 27:30-32, “‘Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.’ Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.” Here, we see an example of a prisoner leading his guards because of his godly character.

A few minutes later, he became the leader to all two hundred and seventy-six people on board because of his godly character. Acts 27:33-36 tell us, “And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, ‘Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.’ And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.” He led them by his example, because they respected his character.

In the same way, godly character will impact people because they will follow us because of what we are and who we represent. They will be able to recognize that we are not seeking power but

rather are seeking to help them become more effective in their lives and in their service for the Lord. Leadership through godly character is very powerful. The disciples were willing to die for Christ, because they had seen Him die for them. When people see that we are seeking the Lord's best for them, we will have a great impact on their lives.

People are watching your life. They are deciding whether they want to follow Christ, because they see the impact that Christ has had in your life. If they see little difference from the lives of the people who are not Christians, your life will have little or no impact for Christ. However, if they see that Christ has changed you to a person who is motivated by the love of Christ, you will lead them by your godly character. May the Lord richly bless you, as you lead others through godly character.

3. A Servant Who Leads by Building Relationships

In Mark 10:42-45, Christ said, “‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” In these verses, we see that greatness is found in service. We see that we become first by becoming the bondservant of all. Many people think that they cannot be a servant who leads. However, Christ demonstrated exactly how to become a servant who leads.

When Christ first began His public ministry, He immediately began inviting people to spend time with Him. In John 1:38-39, we read, “Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), ‘where are You staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).” Then, in John 3:1-2, we read, “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’” In both of these passages, we see that Christ invited individuals to come and spend time with Him where He was staying.

In addition, throughout the four Gospels, we see Christ spending time in the homes of others. In Luke 5:28-29, we see that Matthew (Levi) invited Christ, and all of his tax collector friends, to dinner, “So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them.” Mark 2:15 shows the impact of this event, when it says, “Now it happened, as He was dining in *Levi’s* house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him.” The last four words of this verse say, “and they followed Him.” The disciples and the tax collectors chose to follow Christ, because He demonstrated the attitude of a servant.

Christ was able to lead these people, because He took time to build relationships with them where they lived, worked, and spent their free time. Christ built relationships both with those who followed Him and with those who chose not to follow Him. In fact, Christ chose to spend a lot of time with sinners. Luke 15:1-2 says, “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’” In Luke 19:5-7, we read, “And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.’ So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw *it*, they all complained, saying, ‘He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.’”

These accounts, of Christ eating with people who were called “sinners”, are a very significant action when we consider a verse like Hebrews 7:26, “For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens.” The fact that Hebrews says Christ was separate from sinners does not mean that He did not eat with them. Instead, it means He did not commit the sins they committed. However, He spent plenty of time building relationships with them.

In John 8:10-11, we see Christ talking to the woman who was caught in the act of adultery. Those verses tell us, “When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.’” Christ became a servant who leads, to this woman, because He told her how she could have her sins forgiven,

instead of condemning her.

Today, many people are like this woman. They feel that they are so bad they can never be forgiven. We become a servant to them when we tell them how they can receive forgiveness of sins. If we are going to build relationships with people who feel they are too bad to be forgiven, we usually have to build those relationships in their homes or in some neutral place. They are not likely to come to us. Christ gave us the example of leading as a servant by going to such individuals where they were. We follow His example and go to people where they live, work, and spend their free time. That will give us opportunities to tell them how they can have forgiveness of sins.

However, we also become a servant who leads by building relationships with Christians. Christ was a servant to His followers, as well as to those enslaved to sin. Of course, Christ's best-known example of being a servant to His disciples occurred at the Last Supper, when He washed the feet of His disciples. John 13:3-5 says, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded." Rather than talking about being a servant to one another, Christ modeled servant leadership by washing the feet of the disciples.

Then, in John 13:12-17, Christ explained His actions. "So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.'"

In these verses, we see that Christ says we will be blessed as we become a servant who leads. In our last topic, we talked about becoming a servant who leads by our example of godly character. Here, we see that we become servants who lead by our actions. The Greek style of teaching was to tell people what to do. In contrast, the Hebrew style of teaching was to show people how to do things by example. Today, much of the world has adopted the Greek style of teaching. Most churches have followed the example of the world and think that telling is teaching.

A servant who leads recognizes that he has no authority over others. Instead, a servant who leads realizes the power of example. Paul talked about the impact of example when he said, in 1 Corinthians 4:15-16, "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me." Paul had taken time to build relationships with the Christians at Corinth. Now, he encouraged them to follow his example. Then, in 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul told why he could say follow my example, "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ." Paul could encourage them to follow his example, because he was following the example of Christ.

A servant who leads can only lead as he or she demonstrates godly character and builds relationships with people so that they have a desire to follow his or her example. That is why a servant who leads has such a powerful impact. All who follow such a leader do so because they have made that choice. In John 6:66-69, we read, "From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" The twelve, or at least the eleven, followed Christ because of who He was and what He represented.

They had made the choice to follow and were later willing to die for Christ, because they had seen His example of dying for them.

A servant who leads is a leader who will have a life-changing impact on all those who choose to follow him. We need to regularly ask ourselves the question, "Is my commitment to serve others because my commitment is to be a bondservant of Christ? May the Lord give your life a growing impact, as you continue to grow in your understanding of what it means to be a bondservant of Christ. That will happen as you have a commitment to building relationships with others so that you can have the privilege of serving them. Then, they can follow your example and become more like Christ.

4. A Servant Who Leads by Focusing on Biblical Goals

Leadership is a subject that many people are discussing today. However, most of them are discussing leadership from a worldly perspective rather than a Biblical perspective. As a result, we see few leaders who have developed Biblical priorities for their leadership. That will be the focus of our topic today.

The greatest leader in the history of the world was Christ. However, at the same time, He was also the One who most perfectly demonstrated what it means to be a servant who leads. In Philippians 2:5-8, Christ demonstrated some of the things that are necessary to become an effective servant who leads. Those verses tell us, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.” These verses tell us the things Christ did to become a servant who leads:

- ◆ He made Himself of no reputation
- ◆ He took the form of a bondservant
- ◆ He came in the likeness of men
- ◆ He humbled Himself
- ◆ He became obedient to death
- ◆ He submitted to death on a cross

First, we see that Christ made Himself of no reputation. The word translated “no reputation” means *to empty Oneself*. Although Christ is God and equal with the Father, He chose to lay aside the independent exercise of His divine attributes so that He could carry out the will of the Father. This was demonstrated throughout His ministry. In John 6:38, Christ said, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” Then, as Christ prayed in the garden the night before His crucifixion, we read, in Matthew 26:39, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.” Worldly leadership seeks to do its own will because it does not recognize God’s authority. In contrast, Godly leadership will not seek to do one’s own will but rather the will of the Father.

Second, we see that Christ took the form of a bondservant. The fact that Christ took the form of a bondservant points out that He made a conscious choice. In the same way, we will only be a servant who leads if we make the conscious choice to be the bondservant of God rather than a servant of people. To be a bondservant of God means to make His priorities our priorities. That often means rejecting popularity for obedience. In Mark 1:37-39, we read, “When they found Him, they said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for You.’ But He said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.” We keep focused on the goals that God has for us even when the world offers popularity as a substitute.

Third, we see that Christ came in the likeness of men. The word that is translated “likeness” speaks of becoming like something or taking on its identity. Christ took on the identity of man to the point that He identified with human needs and weaknesses. Hebrews 2:17-18 tell us, “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.” Here, we see that to be a servant who leads, we have to identify fully with the people that we are leading. We cannot use titles, clothes, or anything else that would cause others to think we are better than they are.

Fourth, we see that Christ humbled Himself. If we are going to be a servant who leads, we must choose to humble ourselves rather than force God to humble us. James 4:6-7 says, “But He gives

more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Today, the world places a strong focus on rights. People are demanding their rights. Christ did not demand His rights, but rather submitted Himself to the Father, even though that meant suffering a cruel death. A servant who leads focuses on obedience to the Father rather than any personal rights, even if that includes suffering or even death.

Fifth, we see that Christ became obedient to the point of death. A servant who leads makes the choice to replace his own desires with the desires of God for his life. Christ gave us our example, in Hebrews 10:9, when it says of Him, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” We all need to ask ourselves the question, “Am I here on this earth to do my own will or am I here to do the will of God.” Our answer to that question will determine our effectiveness as a servant who leads. If we are here to do the will of God, we will lead others to also do the will of God.

Sixth, we see that Christ submitted to death on a cross. A servant who leads makes the choice to be obedient to the Lord, whatever that may mean, including death. We might call it learning to die to self. In John 12:24, we read, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.” We see that in learning to die to self, the Lord is able to produce a great harvest that brings glory to Him.

When we make it our goal to be a servant who leads as Christ led, we are then able to effectively do the will of God by carrying out the work of God. In John 17:4, Christ said, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” In the same way, we will glorify God as we finish the work that He has given each of us to do. That work is defined in the Great Commission where we are told to: Make Disciples. That will only happen as we depend on the power of the Holy Spirit instead of depending on our own strength. However, as we yield to the Holy Spirit and depend on His power to work in and through our lives, He will give us His power to make disciples.

The Great Commission points out that the Biblical goal God has for every Christian is to make one or more disciples. Those disciples will imitate us, and become like us, whether that is good or bad. Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” Then, in 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, we read, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.”

A servant who leads will:

- ♦ Make disciples who are servants who lead – 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
they will become examples to others
- ♦ Develop godly reproducing leadership – Mark 1:16-20
they will become fishers of men
- ♦ Develop godly character in that leadership – Mark 3:13-14
they will spend time with Christ, so that they will become like Him
- ♦ Develop the ability to teach in that leadership – Acts 5:28
they will fill their world with the doctrine of Christ
- ♦ Develop a vision of what the will of the Father is in that leadership – Mark 1:35-39
they will seek the will of the Father in prayer
they will develop a vision for the next towns and the world
they will be able to show others how to minister in those towns
- ♦ Develop a dependence on the Holy Spirit – John 15:5; Acts 1:8
they will realize that in their own strength they can do NOTHING
they will realize that in the power of the Spirit, they can help reach the world
- ♦ Develop empowered and commissioned leaders – John 20:21-23

- they will realize that they have been sent and commissioned by Christ
- ♦ Develop leaders who have a goal to finish the work that God has given them – John 17:4;
2 Timothy 4:7-8
 - they will seek to glorify the Father by obedience
 - they will seek to finish the work the Father has given them
 - they will seek to follow the example of Christ and do as He did

The Lord has given us a great privilege as we seek to be a servant who leads by focusing on Biblical goals. The Lord will multiply our ministry as we Make Disciples who also have a desire to become servants who lead because they are obedient to the commands of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you, as you become a servant who leads.

5. A Servant Who Leads by Developing a Plan of Action

Christ demonstrated throughout His ministry what it means to be a servant who leads by love. The night before Christ was crucified, John 13:1 says, “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” In this verse, we see why Christ was a perfect example of a servant who led, because we read that:

- Christ loved His own who were in the world
- Christ loved His own to the end

In this verse, we see why the disciples were motivated to follow Christ. They knew that Christ loved them and would continue to love them. A servant has no power to tell others to follow him. Instead people follow a servant because they choose to do so. The disciples chose to follow Christ, because they knew that He loved them and would continue to love them. If we are going to be effective spiritual leaders, we must learn to lead by love. We are developing a plan of action when we commit ourselves to learn to lead by love.

In order to understand the kind of love we are talking about, we need to understand 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. Those verses tell us, “Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

In these verses, we see that love has two major characteristics:

- ♦ Love is patient
- ♦ Love is kind

These verses tell us eight things that love does not do:

- ♦ Love does not envy (is not jealous)
- ♦ Love does not brag
- ♦ Love does not become proud
- ♦ Love does not behave rudely
- ♦ Love does not seek its own way
- ♦ Love is not provoked
- ♦ Love does not think evil
- ♦ Love does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth

These verses also tell us four things love does:

- ♦ Love bears all things
- ♦ Love believes all things
- ♦ Love hopes all things
- ♦ Love endures all things

Then, this is summed up by saying, “Love never fails”. If we regularly ask the Lord to give us His strength, so that we can be patient and kind, the Lord will give us His strength to avoid the eight things love does not do. He will also give us His strength to regularly practice the things that love does. The key is that we must continually be asking the Lord for His strength so that we are able to act with His actions.

We see that disciples are developed either through fear or love. 1 John 4:18-19 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” We see that Satan wants us to develop disciples through fear, while Christ wants us to develop disciples through love. John 10:10

says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” If we are going to be a servant who leads, our plan of action must include developing disciples the way that Christ developed disciples.

We need to develop our plan of action based on the example of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” In these verses, we see that:

- Christ loves us
- Christ showed that love by dying for us
- Christ gives us the opportunity to respond to that love

One of the ways we respond to the love of Christ is by making disciples with the same love and concern Christ showed as He made disciples. That was the attitude Paul, Silas, and Timothy showed as they made disciples. In 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, we see that they:

- showed the love of a nursing mother - verses 7-9
- provided the example of a caring father - verses 10-12

As we follow their example, and the example of Christ, our plan of action for ministry will be motivated by love.

When we serve people out of love, our concern will be to help others develop the full potential that God has given them rather than seek our own success. Christ has given each Christian a different spiritual SHAPE:

S - spiritual gifts

H - heart or passion for ministry

A - abilities

P - personalities

E - experiences in life

If our plan of action is motivated by fear, we will drive people to accomplish our goals.

If our plan of action is motivated by a mixture of fear and love, we will lead people to accomplish our goals.

If our plan of action is motivated by love, we will serve people and help them develop the full potential of their unique SHAPE to carry out the will of God.

The reason it is so important for our plan of action to be motivated by the love of Christ is found in John 13:34-35, where we read, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” In these verses, we see that:

- ♦ Christ says that He has given us a new commandment to love one another
- ♦ Christ says that the world observes our love for one another
- ♦ Christ says this is how the world sees Christ in us

As we make it our purpose and plan to do all that we do through the love of Christ, we will see that Christ uses that plan to develop spiritual maturity in our lives. 1 John 4:11-12 says, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.” These verses tell us that:

- we respond to the love of God by loving one another
- we experience the abiding presence of God in our lives
- we experience God's love being brought to maturity in our lives

As we think about the thoughts and verses we have just discussed, we see that effective leadership is based on a plan of action motivated by the love of Christ. When we are motivated by the love of Christ, we will do what we do through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, and the love of

Christ flowing through us. When the power of the Holy Spirit is working in us, and the love of Christ is flowing through us, we will do what we do to bring glory to Christ. That is why developing a plan of action that is motivated by the love of Christ is a plan of action that will accomplish the plan and purpose of God rather than our own will. May the Lord richly bless you, as you develop a plan of action for your life that is motivated by the love of Christ.

6. A Servant Who Leads by Developing People

In Luke 5:1-11, we see that Christ invited Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him. This happened after Peter realized his own sinfulness. This passage begins by Christ ministering to the multitudes. Verses 1-3 tell us, “So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.”

In these verses, we see three things about the crowd of people that were gathered together that day:

- The multitudes wanted to hear the Word of God
- The multitudes caused Christ to request the help of the fishermen
- The multitudes were taught the Word of God by Christ

Notice that Christ always had time to teach people who wanted to learn about the Word of God. He also demonstrated a practical lesson. Christ did not have a sound system. As a result, He got in a boat and pushed out a little way from the land so that the water would act as a natural sound system.

Although Christ taught the multitudes, we see, in Luke 5:4-7, that Christ focused on the few. In Luke 5:4-7, we read, “When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.’ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink”

In these verses, we see four things about the fishermen. We see that:

- the fishermen were told to fish
- the fishermen said it was not the appropriate time to fish
- the fishermen chose to be obedient to Christ
- the fishermen saw Christ work mightily

When the disciples saw the way Christ worked, Peter and the other fishermen suddenly recognized something about themselves. Luke 5:8-11 says, “When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.’ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.” In these verses, we see four things about Peter and the other fishermen:

- Peter and the other fishermen recognized their own sinfulness
- Peter and the other fishermen recognized the power of Christ
- Peter and the other fishermen were called to become fishers of men
- Peter and the other fishermen responded to begin training for ministry

In these verses, we see that Peter focused on his sinful condition. At this point in his life, Peter had already known Christ for about a year. (see John 1) He and the other disciples had traveled with Christ to various places during that year. (see John 2-4) They had observed Christ teach and perform various miracles. In John 4, Christ had expanded their vision to see the spiritual needs of the Samaritans. One of the things Peter realized, during this year, was his own sinfulness. That was because he was forced to look at his past. However, on this particular day, Christ called Peter and the other disciples to begin looking to the future. Christ told them what they would become as

they followed Him and obeyed Him. Christ said that, instead of fishing for food, they would become fishers of men who would catch men for Christ.

Christ ministered to the multitudes, but He chose to focus on the few. By spending time with Christ, these men would be transformed, from ordinary men to men who shocked the religious leaders. Acts 4:13 tells us what happened to those fishermen when it says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” In these verses, we see that:

- ♦ their boldness did not come from education.
- ♦ their boldness did not even come from their training.
- ♦ their boldness came from spending time with Christ.

Let's notice how Christ transformed people and how Christ uses us to transform people today. Transformation happens as we follow Christ and show others, by our example, how to follow Christ. In Matthew 4:19, Christ said to these fishermen, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” Notice the first requirement is for us to imitate Christ. Second, we are to invite people to imitate us, as we imitate Christ.

Transformation cannot happen in our own strength. In Luke 24:49, Christ said to the disciples, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Transformation happens as we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit and show others, by our example, what it means to yield to the Holy Spirit. Roman 6 gives us three key words to help us understand what it means to yield.:

- ♦ “know” - we have to know that our old man has been crucified with Christ (this means that we are no longer slaves to sin but are now free to follow Christ) - Romans 6:6
- ♦ “reckon” - we are now to act on the fact that we are now dead to sin (reckon is an accounting term and here means that *we can count on the fact that we are dead to sin and alive to Christ who lives in us* - Galatians 2:20) - Romans 6:11
- ♦ “yield” - we now make the choice to yield ourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead (since we are alive we now have the choice to yield to God who gives us the power to yield to Christ and obey Him) - Romans 6:13, 16

As a spiritual leader, the Lord also equips us to develop others. In Ephesians 4:11-13, we read, “And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;” In these verses, we see that God has given us a foundation (Ephesians 2:20) on which we develop others. That foundation is:

- * the apostles who gave us eyewitness testimony of the resurrection - Acts 1:21-22
- * the prophets who gave us the written Word of God - 2 Peter 1:19-21

Then, on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ gave gifts to spiritual leaders to develop Christians so that all Christians can become involved in the work of the ministry. From Acts 14:23, we see that every church should have a team of leaders who are developing and equipping every Christian for the work of the ministry. Here, in Ephesians 4:11-12, we see that God has given:

- ♦ Evangelists - to equip the saints to share the Gospel
- ♦ Pastors - to equip the saints to minister to each other
- ♦ Teachers - to equip the saints to teach and apply the Word of God

In Ephesians 4:13-16, we see that there are several results when every Christian is being shown how to do the work of the ministry. These include:

- the Christians come to the unity of the faith - verse 13
- the Christians grow in the knowledge of the Son of God - verse 13
- the Christians grow to spiritual maturity - verse 13
- the Christians grow in Christlikeness - verse 13
- the Christians do not remain as spiritual toddlers - verse 14
- the Christians learn to speak the truth in love - verse 15
- the Christians each learn to do their part of the ministry - verse 16

This raises the question of how this can happen, since it does not happen in many churches. The answer to that question is illustrated both by Christ and by Paul. Christ took the disciples with Him and showed them how to become fishers of men. In the process, they learned to depend on Christ and imitate His example of ministry. In the same way, Paul told the leaders of the church in Ephesus, in Acts 20:20-21, “How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Here, we see that Paul took the leaders with him and showed them how to minister both in public places and also from house-to-house. The key is that he showed them how to minister, instead of just telling them they should minister. Today, the Lord wants the leadership team, that is developing in each church, to develop people by taking other people with them as they minister. In the process, those who go along will grow both in godly character and also be shown how to minister effectively to others. This means that one of the things that is needed in churches is for the leadership team to spend more of their time in prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4) where they are showing others how to minister. Then, they need to give those who are being shown the opportunity to do the ministry they have been shown how to do. Ephesians 4:16 says that the result of such a ministry is that every part of the body will learn to work effectively.

The Lord has a ministry for every Christian. May the Lord richly bless you, as you continue to grow in your ministry of being a servant who leads by developing others to carry out the ministry that the Lord has prepared for them.

7. A Servant Who Leads Focuses on the People Being Led

In our last topic, we focused on the fact that a servant who leads will focus on developing people. In this topic, we will focus on the fact that a servant who leads focuses on the people being led. Christ spent three years developing the people who would carry on His ministry when He returned to heaven. As Christ approached the end of that period of time, He shared some very important lessons with the disciples.

In John 15:12-15, Christ said, “‘This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.’” In these verses, we see that:

- ♦ Christ focused on the fact that the disciples were to love one another
- ♦ Christ focused on the fact that they were to lay down their lives for one another
- ♦ Christ focused on obedience to the Word of God
- ♦ Christ focused on sharing His plans

Although Christ knew He was going to die the next day, He spent His time with the disciples and ministered to their needs, rather than focusing on His needs. He knew that when He went away, the disciples would need to love one another in the same way He had loved them over the previous three years. A servant who leads will make it the focus of His ministry to help others build the kind of relationships between one another that will result in them loving one another as Christ has loved them. That kind of love will make it possible for them to be willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of one another.

Christ also focused on obedience to His commandments. Earlier in the evening, Christ had given them the new commandment, recorded in John 13:34-35. That new commandment was to love one another as Christ had loved them. As we see in John 15:12, Christ repeated this commandment. The disciples also remembered other commandments Christ had given them. Those commandments are recorded in the New Testament, so we also have those same commandments.

Then, Christ focused on His changed relationship with the disciples. Christ described that change as a change from servants to friends. As the disciples followed Christ earlier, they had not understood His plans for the future. Christ told them that, because they were His friends, He was now revealing His plans to them. Later, in John 20:17, Christ called them His brethren.

In the same way, a servant who leads helps others become partners with him in ministry. They learn to seek the will of the Lord together, so they can carry out the will of the Lord as partners in ministry. This is illustrated in Acts 13:1-3, where we read: “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.”

As we think through the ministry of Christ, we can think of other ways how Christ showed the disciples to become friends:

- Christ chose the disciples to be with Him
- Christ took the disciples with Him to various places
- Christ answered the questions of the disciples
- Christ encouraged the disciples when they failed

- Christ shared His plans with the disciples
- Christ showed the disciples how to love one another
- Christ commanded the disciples to love one another

As we think about the things Christ did to help the disciples change from servants to brethren, we have a beautiful example of what it means to be a servant who leads. In John 20:17, we read, “Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”’” In this verse, we see that:

- ♦ Christ called the disciples brethren
- ♦ Christ sent messages to His brethren

The word “brethren” is used more than three hundred times in the New Testament. Most times it is used to refer to Christian brothers rather than physical brothers. Christ changed the status of Christians from servants to brethren, because He was helping them to become partners in ministry.

A master-servant relationship is defined in Ephesians 6:5-6, where we read: “Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.” A friendship relationship is defined in John 15:15, where we read: “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” A spiritual brethren relationship is defined in 1 John 3:16 and 4:11, where we read: “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren... Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

Although Christ was going to die in just a few hours, He wanted the disciples to focus on their relationship with one another. He wanted them to learn to treat one another in the same way He had treated them. In fact, as we just saw in 1 John 3:16, Christ calls us to lay down our lives for one another. A servant who leads focuses on some of the ways he can lay down his life for other Christians. There are many ways that we focus on the people being led as we lay down our lives for one another. We will focus on just four of them.

First, we lay down our lives for one another by helping one another grow to spiritual maturity. Scripture talks about various levels of spiritual maturity. We lay down our lives for other Christians by helping them grow, from their present level of spiritual life, to spiritual maturity. Notice some of the levels of spiritual growth that are mentioned in the New Testament:

- ♦ Spiritual new born babes - 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12
- ♦ Spiritual toddlers - 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, 13:11; Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 5:11-14
- ♦ Spiritual children - 1 John 2:12-14
- ♦ Spiritual young men - 1 John 2:12-14
- ♦ Spiritual parents - 1 Corinthians 4:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12; 1 John 2:12-14
- ♦ Spiritual Timothys - Acts 16:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:14-17

Second, we lay down our lives for one another by praying for one another. In John 17:1-26, we have the prayer of Christ the night before He was crucified. Instead of praying to escape His coming death, in John 17:1-5, Christ talked with the Father about His obedience to the Father. Then, Christ spent the rest of the chapter praying for the men the Father had given Him. Included in that prayer was a small section where Christ prayed for us (those who would believe as a result of the ministry of the disciples - John 17:20-23). In 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, and Ephesians 3:14-21, we have two of the many prayers Paul prayed for other Christians.

Third, we lay down our lives for one another by sharing the Word of God with one another. In Luke 24:27-48, we see some of the things Christ did to help the disciples understand the Word after

His resurrection. Luke 24:45 says, “And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” In Acts 18:26, we see that Aquila and Priscilla did the same thing with Apollos, “So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” Instead of rebuking him for his incomplete teaching, they privately helped him to understand the Word of God more completely.

Fourth, we lay down our lives for one another by showing one another how to minister. Notice the four reasons Christ chose the twelve, in Mark 3:13-15. “And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.” We see that Paul did the same thing in Acts 20:4, 20-21, “And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. ...²⁰how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

A servant who leads does not focus on himself. Instead, his focus is on the people being led and their development. May the Lord richly bless you, as you continue to grow as a servant who leads by focusing on the people the Lord gives you the opportunity to lead.

8. A Servant Who Leads Shows People What to Do

In order to be an effective servant who leads, we must make the choice to follow the example of Christ. Christ gave us a good example of showing people what to do by the way He trained the disciples. If we are going to be effective in obeying Christ's command to "Make Disciples", we will make the choice to make disciples in the same way Christ made disciples.

In the time of Christ, there were at least two basic patterns of teaching and training people. The Greek pattern of teaching was to gather people in a group and tell them what to do. This pattern was effective at helping people gain knowledge. The Hebrew pattern of training was to invite people to go with you, so they saw why and how you did what you did. This pattern of training is actually based on Exodus 18:20, where we read: "And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do." Here, we see that the Hebrew pattern of training is concerned about three areas of learning, rather than just knowledge. The Hebrew pattern of training helps people grow in:

- ◆ knowledge – teach them the statutes and laws
- ◆ character – show them the way to walk
- ◆ ministry skills – show them the work to do

As Christ developed the disciples, He began by inviting them to spend time with Him. In John 1:37-46, and Matthew 9:9, we see that Christ gave invitations to several different men to begin spending time with Him. Over the next year, those men spent time with Christ and went with Him as He visited various places. During that year, they had time to observe Christ's character, hear what He taught, and see what He did.

After going places, and doing things, with those men for a year, Christ invited those men to become apprentices and learn to say and do what He was saying and doing. Mark 1:16-20 says, "And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.' They immediately left their nets and followed Him. When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him." In these verses, we see that Christ did three things as He began to show these men how to reach others:

- Christ went to where the disciples were working
- Christ invited the disciples to follow Him
- Christ promised to show them what to do

From these verses, we see that Christ did not ask for volunteers for leadership. Instead, Christ chose to invite these men to become apprentices. Christ gave these men a choice, when He said, "Follow me." They could follow Him with no money promised, or they could continue to fish and make money. Christ did promise them that, if they chose to follow Him, He would make them into something different. Christ said, "I will make you become fishers of men." When we invite people to start going with us, we are not promising them worldly success. Instead, we are inviting them to be changed, so they can help change the world. Christ was going to begin to show them how to reach others.

Later, in that same chapter, Mark 1:38-39 tells us that Christ said to these men, "'Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.' And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons." Christ took those men with Him, so they could observe His character, learn what to say, and see what to do.

Christ was also expanding the vision of the disciples, so they began to see people who were not Jews. In John 4:35, we read, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” Christ had sent the disciples into the town, and they came back with food, because they did not see people who needed to know Christ.

Christ sent a sinful woman into the same town an hour or so later, and she came back, bringing a whole group of people who wanted to know Christ. John 4:39-42 says, “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I *ever* did.’ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’” Christ knew that the disciples had to develop a concern for more than just the Jews. In Matthew 15:21-28, Christ later did the same thing with a Gentile woman.

In addition to helping the disciples develop vision for the lost, Christ also had to show them, by His own example, the need to have compassion for the lost. After the disciples had known Christ for about twenty-one months, and had been apprentices for about nine months, Matthew 9:35-38 tells us, “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” In these verses, we see that:

- the disciples saw what Christ did and taught
- the disciples saw the compassion of Christ
- the disciples were told to pray for laborers

During their nine months as apprentices, the disciples were able to observe and to participate. Then, in Matthew 10:1-8, Christ sent the disciples out on their own for the first time. In Matthew 10:5, Christ told them what not to do. “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.” The disciples were not yet ready to cross the barriers of language, culture, or another religion. That would come later.

Then, in Matthew 10:6-8, Christ told the disciples what to say and do. “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.” They were to share good news, and they were to reach out to the needs of people who were hurting.

In Mark 6:30-31, we see what Christ did when the disciples returned from this trip. “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.” Here, we see that part of the ministry of developing apprentices is giving them an opportunity to report what they have done and what they have taught.

Later, we see that Christ sent out a larger group of seventy of his followers. Luke 10:1-2 says, “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” Verses 3-12 also tell us that Christ gave the seventy instructions about

what to do and what to preach.

Luke 10:17, 20 show us that Christ also gave this larger group the opportunity to report what they had done and what they had taught, “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ ...²⁰‘Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.’” The seventy had also been observing Christ over the previous two years, but they still had to grow in their understanding of what was most important.

Today, most Christians have never led another person to Christ. There are two closely related reasons for this. First, they have been told what to do, rather than being shown what to say and do. Second, because they have never been shown what to do, if they do try to witness, they often witness in their own strength, because they have never been shown the importance of depending on the Holy Spirit and praying for boldness.

Christ showed the disciples His prayer life. Mark 1:35-36 says, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him.” Christ helped the disciples realize they could never minister effectively in their own strength. As a result, we see that the disciples prayed, rather than depending on themselves. Acts 4:31 says, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Christ calls us to follow His example and make disciples whose lives are transformed, because they have been shown how to develop godly character, how to minister effectively and what to share as they minister to others. May the Lord richly bless you, as you help other Christians grow in godly character, Biblical knowledge, and effective ministry, because you have provided a living example of total spiritual development, rather than just growth in knowledge.

9. A Servant Who Leads Focuses on Doing the Right Things

In life, it is easy to be busy doing many things. However, if we are going to lead people by serving them, we need to make certain that we are doing the right things, so that we provide an example for them of the things that The Word of God says are the most important things. That will be the focus of our topic today.

In Matthew 28:18-20, Christ gave us the Great Commission. That certainly tells us what Christ views as important. Those verses tell us, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

In these verses, we see that Christ is the One who has all authority. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. If we are going to be a servant who leads by doing the right things, we must begin by recognizing that Christ is the One who has the authority, and we are the ones who are to be His servants. When He gives us a command, we are not to just take it as a suggestion. As a result, in verses 19-20, we see that Christ gives us one command, “Make Disciples”. He then gives us three participles that tell us how to carry out that command:

- ♦ Going (we are to go to people, not expect them to come to us)
- ♦ Baptizing (we are to help them identify with Christ and His body, the church)
- ♦ Teaching (we are to show them how to obey all that Christ commanded)

Exodus 18:19-21 gives us five things that we do to help people become disciples, “‘Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.’” In these verses, we see that we Make Disciples by:

- praying for them (Ephesians 3:14-21 gives us an example of prayer for disciples)
- teaching them the Word of God (we need to teach all the Scripture – Acts 20:27; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- showing them the way to walk (inviting them to imitate us – 1 Corinthians 11:1)
- showing them how to do the work (modeling Biblical ministry – Matthew 4:19)
- sharing the work with them (sharing part of the ministry – John 21:15-17)

As we look at these things, we see that discipleship is not a course we teach. Instead, we “Make Disciples” by the life we model and the priorities by which we live. When we spend time with people, and share our lives with them, those people will become what we are, whether that is good or bad. In order to make disciples, we choose to make it our purpose to spend time with people and share our lives with them. Over time, they will begin to learn to walk in the Spirit, as they see that we are depending on the Holy Spirit to guide us. Then, they will begin to talk about the things we talk about and do the things we do.

In addition to giving us a Great Commission, Christ also gave us a new commandment. John 13:34-35 says, “‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.’” It is impossible to obey this commandment in our own strength. We do not naturally love others as much as Christ loves us. In fact, if we depend on ourselves, John 15:5 tells us, “‘I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without

Me you can do nothing.” As you see, the last phrase tells us that without Christ we can do nothing.

That is why, in John 14, Christ went on to talk about the fact that He would give us the Holy Spirit to give us the power to obey this commandment. Then, Christ went on to tell us, in John 15:1-12, that we will only be able to obey this commandment as we abide in Him. The first eleven verses of that chapter remind us that we must abide in Christ to be fruitful. Then, John 15:12 reminds us again, “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” New and struggling Christians will only begin to understand how much Christ loves them as they spend time with us and see the love that we have for them.

Then, Ephesians 4:12-16 tells us how we make disciples who love. Christ gave spiritual leaders, “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

In Ephesians 4:12, we see that spiritual leaders are to equip the saints for the work of ministry, so that, each Christian will come to spiritual maturity. The word “equip” means *to restore something to its original condition*. The original condition of mankind was without sin. However, when Adam sinned, it changed his condition. It also changed his relationships with others. In his relationship with God, Adam experienced separation. In his relationship with himself, he experienced fear, guilt, and shame. In his relationship with others, he began to blame. Equipping people and helping them grow to spiritual maturity means that we help them move:

- ◆ from separation to relationship with God (Romans 8:14-17) and daily fellowship with God (1 John 1:3-7)
- ◆ from fear to love (1 John 4:18)
- ◆ from guilt to forgiveness (Acts 26:18), cleansing (1 John 1:9,) and forgiving others (Ephesians 4:32)
- ◆ from shame to new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- ◆ from blame to taking responsibility for their own choices and their consequences (Galatians 5:13). As you see from this verse, this also equips us to serve one another in love.

In Ephesians 4:13, we see that spiritual leaders are to bring the saints to spiritual maturity. This includes helping each Christian:

- come to the unity of the faith
- grow in the knowledge of the Son of God
- become a mature Christian
- grow in Christlikeness

In Ephesians 4:14, we see that spiritual leaders are not to leave Christians as spiritual toddlers. If we, as leaders, fail to serve Christians by helping them grow and mature, they will remain spiritual toddlers. According to Scripture, spiritual toddlers:

- ◆ are like people who are not Christians – 1 Corinthians 3:1
- ◆ are not able to understand difficult teachings from the Word of God – 1 Corinthians 3:2
- ◆ experience envy, strife, and divisions – 1 Corinthians 3:3
- ◆ are limited in their talk, understanding, and thinking of spiritual things – 1 Corinthians 13:11
- ◆ are tossed to and fro by every false teaching – Ephesians 4:14
- ◆ are easily deceived by false teachers – Ephesians 4:14

- ◆ are dull of hearing to spiritual truth – Hebrews 5:11
- ◆ need to be re-taught the basics of Christianity – Hebrews 5:12
- ◆ are unskillful in the word of righteousness – Hebrews 5:13
- ◆ have not developed their senses to recognize good and evil – Hebrews 5:14

Perhaps, because we, as leaders, have tried to depend on telling others what to do, instead of spending time with them and showing them how to grow to maturity, we see many in our own churches who are still spiritual toddlers.

In Ephesians 4:15, we see that spiritual leaders are to speak the truth. The truth is not always popular, but it is the thing that will transform lives. That is why, as Christian leaders, we need to make certain that:

- we are speaking the truth
- we are speaking the truth in love
- we are helping people grow up into Christ
- we are helping people recognize Christ as their head (this is taught best by example as they see that Christ is our head.)

In Ephesians 4:16, we see that spiritual leaders are to have a goal to help every Christian learn to function effectively. This means that we set the example by becoming a spiritual parent to a few Christians and then help them become spiritual parents to those who are becoming Christians. As each Christian learns to function effectively, we see that Christ:

- is the One who joins the whole body together
- wants the body to grow together and become one
- wants the body to develop a unity of ministry
- wants every Christian to do his or her part
- wants every Christian to learn to function effectively
- says this will cause an increase in the body
- says this will cause the body to build itself up in love

If we are servants who lead by focusing on doing the right things, we will see people grow in Christlikeness. In these verses, we see that growing in Christlikeness causes people to:

- grow in unity
- grow in maturity
- grow in ministry
- grow in love

What a privilege we have, as spiritual leaders, to serve other Christians in their growth in these four areas, because we have made the choice to focus on doing the things Christ commands us to do. May the Lord richly bless you, as you are a servant who leads by making disciples who are being shown, by your example, how to obey the new commandment to love one another as Christ loved us.

10. A Servant Who Leads Focuses on Informal Communication

Christ is our perfect example of a servant who leads. One of the key things, that made Christ an effective servant who leads, was His ability to really listen to His followers. A key factor in informal communication is the fact that a servant who leads takes time to listen to what those around him are saying and doing.

In Mark 6:7-13, Christ sent the disciples out two-by-two to minister to others. As we read those verses, we see that Christ gave the disciples specific instructions. Then, He sent them out to minister. When the disciples returned, Mark 6:30-31 tell us, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.” In these verses, we see that:

- Christ gave the disciples the opportunity to share what they had done
- Christ gave the disciples the opportunity to share what they had taught
- Christ gave the disciples the opportunity to share without interruptions
- Christ gave the disciples the opportunity for rest and leisurely discussion

The four things Christ did are four key things we will do if we are going to be a servant who leads. A servant who leads is a good listener. If we want to have a real impact on people, we make the choice to really:

- listen to what people have done
- listen to what people have taught
- listen without interruptions or distractions
- listen and discuss without being in a rush

First, we listen to what people have done. Romans 12:15 tells us, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” When we get excited about what others are doing, and rejoice with them for the way the Lord is working through their lives, we give them a desire to do even more. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” In these verses, we see that we do two things to stir up love and good works in their lives. First, we get together and spend time with them. Second, we encourage them by getting excited about what the Lord is doing through their lives.

Second, we listen to what people have taught. This helps us to know what they clearly understand and shows those areas where they will eventually need further teaching. This principle is illustrated by Aquila and Priscilla, in Acts 18:24-26, where we read: “Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

Instead of disagreeing in the synagogue, Aquila and Priscilla just listened carefully to Apollos. By listening carefully, they knew what he understood and what he needed to have explained more clearly. Then, they invited him to visit with them alone (probably for dinner). While they were talking, they explained to him about the death and resurrection of Christ so that he understood the way of God more accurately. We see the results in Acts 18:27-28, where we read: “And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews

publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.”

Third, we listen without interruptions or distractions. Christ could see that the constant coming and going of the multitudes made it hard for the disciples to tell Him what they had done and taught. As a result, Christ took the disciples into a desert place, where they could be alone. Christ made it clear that He wanted to give full attention to the disciples and what they were telling Him. When we listen, without interruptions or distractions, people know that we care what they are saying.

Fourth, we listen and discuss without being in a rush. Christ chose to spend a block of time with just the disciples. In the same way, we need to choose to spend extended periods of time with those we lead by creating blocks of time to be with them, so there will be time for extended periods of listening and discussion. Christ illustrated this principle in Matthew 16:13, where we read: “When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, ‘Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’ Christ took time to listen to the disciples. Then, He used that discussion time to introduce “the church” to them.

Christ calls us to listen more than talk. In James 1:19-20, we read, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” In these verses, we see that:

- ◆ an effective leader will be quick to listen
- ◆ an effective leader will be slow to speak
- ◆ an effective leader will avoid wrath

In addition to carefully listening to the disciples, Christ used informal communication when He sent informal messages to the disciples. By comparing Mark 16:1-7 and John 20:11-18 we see that Christ sent an informal message to Peter, and the other disciples, by Mary Magdalene. Christ knew how Peter felt after denying Him three times, so Christ sent him a personal message through Mary.

Later, when Peter decided to go back to fishing, and took six of the other disciples with him, Christ went to where Peter was so He could give him a personal message. Peter must have still felt the Lord could no longer use him, so felt all he could do was go back to fishing. Instead of rebuking Peter, Christ gently asked Peter if Peter loved Him more than he loved the fish. Then, Christ gave Peter three personal messages in John 21:15-17:

- feed My lambs
- shepherd My sheep
- feed My sheep

In addition to Christ sending personal messages to His disciples, Paul also sent many personal messages to both individuals and groups. Think about these personal messages Paul sent to others:

- Paul sent personal messages to Christians in Rome – Romans 16:1-16
- Paul sent personal messages to Christians in Corinth – 1 Corinthians 16:15-20
- Paul sent personal messages to Christians in Colosse – Colossians 4:7-17
- Paul sent personal messages to Timothy – the books of 1 and 2 Timothy
- Paul sent a personal message to Titus – the book of Titus
- Paul sent a personal message to Philemon – the book of Philemon
- Paul also sent a personal messenger at times when he could not go
- Paul sent Timothy to Corinth – 1 Corinthians 4:14-17
- Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica – 1 Thessalonians 3:1-8

The book of Proverbs also gives us many principles of effective communication if we want to be servants who lead. We will list just a few here and then encourage you to study the book of Proverbs from the viewpoint of looking for effective communication principles:

- ◆ an effective leader knows when to keep quiet – Proverbs 10:19

- ◆ an effective leader will speak with soft words – Proverbs 15:1-2
- ◆ an effective leader is respected for listening – Proverbs 17:28
- ◆ an effective leader will listen before answering – Proverbs 18:13
- ◆ an effective leader listens to both sides – Proverbs 18:17
- ◆ an effective leader avoids trouble by careful talking – Proverbs 21:23

One of the things we see is that to be an effective servant who leads, we must continually seek wisdom from the Lord. Scripture gives us two key sources for true wisdom:

- this wisdom is gained through prayer – James 1:5
- this wisdom comes from above – James 3:17; Isaiah 55:8-9

The Lord will greatly use us as we seek His wisdom. That way, after listening, we will be able to share the wisdom of God, instead of the wisdom of man.

The Lord will guide us as we seek Him and ask Him to help us become better listeners. By becoming a good listener, we will greatly multiply our ministry. May the Lord richly bless you, as you are a servant who leads by being a good listener.

11. A Servant Who Leads Focuses on Biblical Priorities

A servant who leads is one who leads others by his or her example. Christ gave us an example throughout His life and ministry. One of the areas Christ gave us an example to follow was in His priorities. If we are going to have an eternal impact on others, we must have the same priorities for our lives that Christ had for His life.

Throughout His ministry, Christ made it clear that there were certain priorities in His life. In Mark 1:35, we read, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” In this verse, we see that Christ showed us that our first priority is to continue to build our relationship with God. Christ showed us four things about this priority. We see that:

- the first priority of Christ was fellowship with the Father
- the first priority of Christ was to begin the day with fellowship
- the first priority of Christ was to be alone with the Father
- the first priority of Christ was to spend time in prayer

By looking at this verse, we see that our first priority is to grow in our understanding of the love of God for us and grow in our understanding of what it means to love God.

First, we will only be effective servants who lead if we continue to build our fellowship with the Father. Here, we see that fellowship with the Father only develops as we spend time with the Father and with Christ. 1 John 1:3-4 says, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.” John realized that he must have fellowship with both the Father and with Christ if he was going to be an effective servant for Christ.

1 John 1:5-7 tells us what is necessary to have genuine fellowship with God, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” We cannot have fellowship with the Father and the Son if we are walking in darkness. We will have fellowship as we walk in the light. This reminds us that fellowship is not something that we just experience during times of prayer. Instead fellowship should be our experience throughout the day because we are walking in the light.

Second, Christ gave us the example that fellowship begins as soon as we are awake. Once we wake up, we can begin our fellowship with the Lord before we even get out of bed. If we wake up in the middle of the night, we can use that time to enjoy fellowship with the Lord. Fellowship is sharing our lives with Christ. That happens as we talk to Him in prayer and let Him talk to us as we meditate on His Word. We can do both of those things throughout the day, including while we are still lying in bed.

Third, Christ gave us the example that fellowship includes taking time to be alone with God. We need to be enjoying fellowship with God while we are around other people. However, we also need to take time to just be alone with God as we meditate and pray without any interruptions. It is often during these times that we begin to understand, in a greater way, the greatness of the love God has for us.

Fourth, Christ showed us that an important part of fellowship is spending time with God in prayer. There is a great difference between saying prayers and praying. Saying prayers is repeating prayers that may have little or nothing to do with your life. True prayer is:

- * Talking to God about the things that are important to you in your personal relationship with God (fellowship)
- * Talking to God, and seeking His, will about the things that He wants us to do (ministry)

Christ showed us that our first priority is to love God. Then, Christ showed us that our second priority is to love one another, as He has loved us. In John 13:34-35, we read, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Christ had spent more than three years with the disciples. During this time, they continually saw how much Christ loved them. It was only after they had seen how Christ loved them that He could give them this new commandment. In these verses, we see three things. We see that:

- we are to love one another as Christ has loved us
- we cause others to recognize that we are disciples of Christ because we love one another
- we show this love for one another by our actions

In order to carry out this second priority, we must love one another in the strength Christ provides, not in our own strength. We cannot love others as Christ loves us in our own strength. We will only love others as Christ loves us as we yield to the Holy Spirit,⁰ so that the power of the Holy Spirit is working in us. That is what allows the love of Christ to flow through us.

As we study the life of Christ, we also see that Christ showed us a third priority for our lives. In addition to loving God and loving one another, we are also to love the world around us. In Matthew 9:36-38 we read, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” If we love the world around us, as Christ loves them, we will:

- ◆ see the multitudes as Christ saw them
- ◆ have the compassion of Christ for them
- ◆ see that the harvest around us is abundant
- ◆ recognize that there is a shortage of workers to tell these people about Christ
- ◆ pray the Lord of the harvest and ask Him to send forth laborers into His harvest
- ◆ respond by going out into the harvest field and sharing the Gospel – Matthew 10:1-8

Here, we see that true love is demonstrated by obedience to Christ that results in us becoming partners with Christ in reaching out to the multitudes. Isaiah 6:8-9a gives us an example of how Isaiah responded to God. Those verses say, “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here *am* I! Send me.’ And He said, ‘Go, and tell this people.’” Isaiah did not say, Here am I, send my sister or brother. Instead, he responded in love by immediately making himself available to go and speak for God. That is what the Lord calls us to do also.

As you seek to lead others, you will only lead them effectively as you lead with the same three priorities Christ demonstrated in His ministry. That is why to be an effective servant who leads, our priorities must be to:

1. love God with our whole heart
2. love one another as Christ loves us
3. love the world as Christ loves the world

As we have these things as our priorities, we will be effective servants who lead by love. May the Lord richly bless you, as you make these the three priorities of your life.

12. A Servant Who Leads Focuses on Team Work

Christ had many who followed Him, and even participated in ministry with Him. Luke 10:1 tells us, “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” In this verse, we see that Christ sent out thirty-five teams to go before Him to each of the cities He would be visiting. Luke 10:2-12 shows us that Christ gave these teams very specific instructions before He sent them out to minister.

Luke 6:12-13 also tells us that Christ had a smaller team within the larger group of disciples. Those verses tell us, “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself*; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:” In these verses, we see that Christ chose this smaller team after spending an entire night in prayer.

Mark 3:13-15 tells us why Christ chose this smaller team. Those verses tell us, “And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:” In these verses, we see that the first reason why Christ chose the twelve was so that they could be with Him. These men had already spent about twenty-one months traveling with Christ to various places. However, Christ was now choosing them to spend even more time with Him. Later, He would send them out to preach and minister with power. Christ chose this team to be with Him for at least four reasons:

- ♦ Christ chose to work through people
- ♦ Christ chose the people through whom He would work
- ♦ Christ chose to spend much time with His team
- ♦ Christ chose to train His team by example

First, Christ chose to work through people. Christ has the power to cause all of the people in the world to hear Him directly at the same time since He is the One who created the universe. He could have done the entire ministry Himself. Tragically, some Christian leaders miss this point, and try to do the entire ministry by themselves. Instead, Christ chose to work through people.

Second, Christ chose the people through whom He would work. Christ did not ask for volunteers among the larger group of disciples. Instead, as we saw in the second paragraph, Christ spent the entire night in prayer to the Father before choosing the twelve. In the same way, we need to be asking the Father whom we should choose to be a part of the team He gives us the opportunity to develop.

Third, Christ chose to spend much time with His team. During the first twenty-one months of His ministry, Christ spent large amounts of time with the multitudes and the larger group of disciples. Matthew 4:23 tells us, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” However, the crowds quickly thinned out when Christ began telling the requirements to be His disciples. John 6:66-68 says, “From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’” As a result, Christ spent a larger and larger amount of time with just the twelve during the last twenty-one months of His earthly ministry.

Fourth, Christ chose to train His team by example. As we saw, in Mark 3:13, the first reason Christ chose the twelve was so they could be with Him. The result of the twelve spending time with Christ is clearly revealed in Acts 4:13. There we read, “Now when they saw the boldness of

Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” People who spend much time with us will also become what we are. That is why Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” We will transform others by spending much time with them if we are personally imitating Christ.

Since Christ chose a small team, and chose to spend the last half of His ministry developing and transforming that team, we also need to do the same thing, because that team will multiply our ministry. When choosing a team, Luke 6:12-13 shows that our basic responsibility must be to spend much time in prayer. We need to pray that the Lord will lead us to FAT (see below) people:

- ◆ F faithful – 1 Corinthians 4:2
- ◆ A available – Matthew 4:18-22
- ◆ T teachable – John 14:4, 8, 22
- ◆ with two basic attitudes:
 - ◆ a learner’s attitude – Acts 9:5-6
 - ◆ a servant’s heart – John 13:13-17

As Christ chose a team, He also gave them on-the-job training in teams. He later gave the teams the opportunity to report what they done and what they had taught. In Mark 6:7, Christ sent the twelve out in teams of two. He then gave them the opportunity to report what they had done and what they had taught. Mark 6:30 says, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.”

Because the apostles had been trained as a team, they also ministered as teams. In Acts 3:1-4:22, we see that Peter and John ministered as a team, both to a man who could not walk and also to the Jewish religious leaders. Later Acts 8:14 shows us that Peter and John ministered, as a team, to the Samaritans. That verse says, “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.”

In Acts 13:1-3, we see that the Holy Spirit also sent people out in teams. Those verses tell us, “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.” In these verses, we notice two things about team ministry. In Acts 13:1, we see that the Holy Spirit had developed a leadership team in Antioch that came from five different areas of the Roman world. Then, in Acts 13:2, we see that the Holy Spirit sent out a church planting team to take the Gospel to new areas.

Throughout his ministry, Paul continued to add additional people to that church planting team. We will mention just four illustrations. In Acts 15:40, Paul added Silas to the team. In Acts 16:1-3, Timothy was added to the team. Then, in Acts 16:8-10, Luke was added to the team (notice the change from “they” to “we” in verses eight and ten). In Acts 20:4, we see the team that traveled with Paul at a later time, “And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.”

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, we see that Christ calls us to work together as a team. In those verses, we see the following things about team ministry:

- the body of Christ has many members
- the parts of the body are each uniquely created by God
- the parts of the body all need each other
- the parts of the body least noticed are equally important

- the parts of the body are to care for one another
- the parts of the body are to suffer together
- the parts of the body are to rejoice together

In order to help Christians learn to function as a team, Christ gave all Christians spiritual gifts. Romans 12:3 says that God has given each of us a measure of faith. That verse says, “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” Verses 4 and 5 tell us that we are all dependent on one another. Then, verses 6-8 point out that each of us have been given different spiritual gifts. However, none of us have been given all of these gifts so that we will function as a body, not as isolated individuals.

1 Peter 4:10-11 tells us the purpose of those gifts. Those verses tell us, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” In these verses, we see three key points about team ministry:

- ♦ these gifts are for the purpose of serving one another
- ♦ these gifts are given to us so that we can be good stewards
- ♦ these gifts are given because of the varieties of the grace of God

God has given us a great privilege to be His servants. We become servants who lead as we help others learn to work together as a team. The Lord will do much more than we can ever imagine through us, as we serve other Christians, by showing them how to function together as a team that focuses on bringing glory to God. May the Lord richly bless you, as you have the opportunity to be a servant who leads other Christians, by showing them how to work together as a team to accomplish the work of the Lord.

13. A Servant Who Leads Demonstrates Servant Leadership

In Mark 10:35-40, James and John asked Christ to have the privilege of sitting on His right and left hand in the kingdom. Matthew 20:20-28 adds the fact that they actually had their mother make the request, as they thought that might help them get these positions of authority and power. Mark 10:41 and Matthew 20:24 tell us the response of the other ten, “And when the ten heard *it*, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.” This would indicate that the other ten had the same goal, but felt that James and John were trying to get these positions by asking first.

Christ used this opportunity to explain the nature of true spiritual leadership. First, Christ began by describing the leadership pattern of the world. Mark 10:42 says, “But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.’” The goal of every person who depends on self is to exercise control, power, and authority over others. This is so that they can get what they want in life. People, who depend on self, have a very difficult time seeing things from the viewpoint of others.

Christ said that true spiritual leadership is just the opposite of worldly leadership. Mark 10:43 tells us, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.” The word that is translated “servant” means, *one who carries out the commands of another*. Here, we see that if we have a desire to be great, we will only become great as we carry out the commands of the Lord. As Christ said to the Father when He prayed in Gethsemane, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.” Christ was concerned about carrying out the will of the Father.

Christ went on to say, in Mark 10:44, “And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all.” The word that is translated “slave” means, *one who is devoted to another to the disregard of one’s own interests*. This kind of leadership requires that we take time to see things from the viewpoint of others, not our own viewpoint. It requires really listening to others so that we hear what they are really saying. Then, it involves taking action to do what is best for others, even when that is not what is best for yourself.

Christ completed His explanation of spiritual leadership in Mark 10:45. That verse tells us, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” The word that is translated “ransom” means, *to liberate many from misery and the penalty of their sins*. The word that is translated “serve” twice in this verse is the same root word as the word translated “servant” in verse 43. The word “serve” means, *to attend to anything, that may serve another’s interests*.

We could compare worldly and spiritual leadership to a pyramid. In the world, people want to be at the top of the pyramid where everyone meets their needs. In contrast, Christ said that He came to serve the needs of the entire world. Christ did this by giving Himself as a ransom to liberate many from the misery and penalty of their sins. He calls us to follow His example and serve the needs of the world by liberating many from the misery and penalty of their sins. He also calls us to help others reach their full potential in Christ.

That means that the focus of our life and ministry is to be a servant of Christ who carries out His commands and follows His example. That means that our great concern will be the best interests of others. The best interests of others include helping others to experience forgiveness of sins. Also included in the best interests, of those who become Christians, is helping them reach the full potential Christ has for them. We might put it this way:

- * if we drive people, they will serve us until they can get out of our way
- * if we lead people, we can lead them as far as we have gone

* if we serve people, we can help them reach their full potential in Christ

Paul demonstrated five ways that he served others and helped them reach their full potential in Christ, by his prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21. In that prayer he prayed that:

- ◆ they would be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man
- ◆ they would be rooted and grounded in love
- ◆ They would be able to comprehend the four dimensions of Christ's love
- ◆ They would know the love of Christ which passes knowledge
- ◆ They would be filled with all the fullness of God

Paul concludes that prayer, in Ephesians 3:20-21, by telling what can happen as we serve people and help them reach their full potential. Those verses say, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

Going back to our pyramid, according to Ephesians 2:20, Christ is the chief cornerstone and provides the foundation on which all others can have spiritual life. Ephesians 2:20 says that the apostles provide the next level of the foundation because the apostles gave us eyewitness testimony of the resurrection and the prophets gave us the written Word of God. True spiritual life must be based on the resurrection of Christ and the instruction of the Word of God. If we are Christian leaders, we are to serve other Christian leaders, other Christians and non-Christians so that they can be liberated from the misery and penalty of their sins.

Christian leaders serve other Christian leaders by strengthening them in their ministry. They serve others Christians by helping them grow. They serve non-Christians by sharing the Gospel with them, so they can receive forgiveness of sins. Christians serve other Christians, by helping them grow, and non-Christians, by sharing the Gospel with them. At every level, we are to be concerned about the best interests of others, not our own interests.

In John 21:15-17, Christ said we lead by loving Him. Those verses say, "So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'" These verses tell us that effective godly leadership is not based on natural leadership skills, programs, methods, or anything else. Effective godly leadership is based on loving Christ. We also see that effective godly leadership:

- focuses on feeding young Christians
- focuses on providing shepherding ministries
- focuses on feeding maturing Christians

Two passages that give us help on providing effective shepherding ministries are Isaiah 40:11 and Ezekiel 34:1-16, where God talks about the failure of Israel's shepherds and tells how He will lead the sheep. In those verses, we see that:

- ◆ an effective shepherd feeds the flock
- ◆ an effective shepherd provides protection to young Christians
- ◆ an effective shepherd gently leads Christians who are leading others
- ◆ an effective shepherd will feed Christians from the Word of God
- ◆ an effective shepherd strengthens the diseased (those affected by false teaching)
- ◆ an effective shepherd strengthens the sick (those affected by sinful living)
- ◆ an effective shepherd helps the sheep lie in a good fold (fellowship)
- ◆ an effective shepherd brings back those who have been driven away

- ♦ an effective shepherd binds up the broken
- ♦ an effective shepherd seeks the lost

In Galatians 5:13, Christ calls us to serve one another in love. That verse says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” In this verse, we see three key things:

- Christians have been called to liberty
- Christians are not to use that liberty to satisfy the flesh
- Christians are to use that liberty to serve one another in love

We see the basic attitudes necessary for effective servant leadership in Philippians 2:3-4. Those verses tell us, “*Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” If we want to be effective servant leaders, we will have the following attitudes:

- we will do nothing out of strife (putting self forward)
- we will do nothing out of conceit or vainglory (pride)
- we will have a humble opinion of ourselves
- we will consider others better than ourselves
- we will not look out for our own best interests
- we will look out for the best interests of others

Finally, we see the basic actions for effective servant leadership in 1 Peter 4:10-11. Those verses tell us, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” In these verses, we see that we are to have two basic actions for effective servant leadership:

- when we speak, we are to speak the Word of God
- as we serve, we are to serve with the ability God gives

God has called us to be a servant who leads by demonstrating servant leadership. This means that we have to give our desire for power and control to Christ and become His servant and follow His example. We will help others reach their full potential, in Christ, as we serve them. May the Lord richly bless you, as you provide an example of godly servant leadership, by your example, and serve others, so they can reach their full potential in Christ.