

TREK 101

Christian

Discipleship

**SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN
LIFE**

LESSON 11 CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

“Work hard to show the results of your salvation,
obeying God with deep reverence and fear.” Philippians
2:12b (NLT)

A Ministry of Rockpointe Church

Lesson 11

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

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“LEADERSHIP” –this can be an intimidating word for most. The majority of people like you who will go through this Spiritual Disciplines course within TREK will think that a final lesson on Leadership is out of place; and especially most will think that this lesson has very little to do with you, since you may be thinking: “I am not a Leader,” or “No one has ever asked me to lead anything.” It may be true that you are more comfortable following rather than leading out. You may assume your personality is better suited for following, and that you don’t have the spiritual gift of leadership (Rom. 12:8) – so you are not required to lead...right?

Well... not exactly :) Leadership can be defined as both influence and action, and since God has called every Christian to influence others for the sake of the Kingdom of God [remember the Great Commission in Mt. 28:18-20... “*as you go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...teaching them...*”] and this absolutely requires action on your part – in essence, all Christians are required to lead!

However, the Bible does not teach that every Christian is required to pastor a church, lead a Bible study, or be in charge of some aspect of ministry. Yet, that does not mean that God does not require leadership in your personal life and ministry. Think about what God does expect from you in terms of leadership:

- 1) God does assume that every Christian will be faithful to pursue a specific ministry within your home, community, or church: (Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:5; 2 Cor. 5:18, 20; Eph. 2:10). Each of us is required to minister (serve) in some way. – What is your ministry? How are you daily serving the Lord, your family, the church, and your community? There are no excuses or exemptions for believers.
- 2) As you pursue your ministry, it should be undergirded by the Spiritual Gift(s) that God has granted you to accomplish more effectively the task (ministry) which He has called you to do (Ro. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Ti. 4:14). Have you ever identified what is your spiritual gift(s)? If so, are you faithfully using those gifts to encourage, help, and build up God’s family? – **READ: Eph. 4:11-16**
- 3) In order to be faithful to fulfill your ministry, using your spiritual gifts, God has equipped YOU to lead – and to lead is to *influence* others with the gospel (by your life and message) AND by your ACTION! As you show love, extend mercy, pray diligently, serve faithfully, pursue unity, act honestly, and give of your life (talents-skills-abilities-gifts-passions) to others for the sake of Christ...you are leading!!!! God has equipped every Believer to lead well for the glory of God!

Therefore, **Christian Leadership is pursuing godly action, an action which helps others grow in Christ.** Your Christian leadership can take a million different forms (from being “out front and visible” to leading from “behind the scenes” and in the privacy of your own life). You can lead anywhere. Just lead!

A. Biblical Leadership

Before we lead, we must learn to follow: **Leading by Following Christ -**

There are many images of leadership in today's world. 1) The most prominent image of leadership is the general of an army or the head of a company. The head of a company may listen to other people before making a decision, but when the decision has been made everyone else is expected to act in compliance with what has been decided.

2) Another leadership image, prominent in western countries, is based on the idea of democracy. In this case, the decision is made on the basis of the popular opinion of the people, and the leader is the person who has responsibility for carrying out the decision of the people.

3) A third image, prominent in Asian countries, is leadership by consensus. In this case, everyone decides together what should be done and then everyone works together to accomplish what is decided.

4) A fourth leadership image, based on the ideal of individual freedom, emphasizes the right and responsibility of each person to guide his or her own life. Every person is encouraged to have a dream of what he or she would like to become, and then to follow that dream.

**While all of these leadership images have value, they all contrast with the biblical image of leadership. According to the biblical image, leaders are called by God and are called to listen, follow, and obey everything God reveals to us. Christian leaders submit to Jesus' authority and lead the church to carry out Jesus' will (Mt. 28:18).

Christian leadership is exemplified by A. **service** and **loving example** rather than by exerting pressure and manipulation. B. Christian leadership is accomplished through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit using spiritual gifts which God gives to the church. C. Finally, Christian leadership is empowered and driven by love. This is God's love revealed to us through Jesus Christ which now motivates the church and individual Christians to accomplish the five purposes which God has given to the CHURCH:

1) *Worship*, 2) *Evangelism*, 3) *Discipleship*, 4) *Ministry*, and 5) *fellowship*

- We lead by following Christ. We lead by obeying His commands. We lead by following Christ's perfect example of Christian leadership

Read John 13:1-17:

"On the night before Jesus was crucified, Jesus gathered with His disciples to celebrate Passover. Passover is a Jewish festival in which they remember the time when God freed their people from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 1-12). As the evening meal was being served, Jesus took off His outer clothing, wrapped a towel around His waist, and began to wash His disciples' feet."

According to John 13:1-3, what two things did Jesus show by washing His disciples' feet?

First, Jesus “**showed them the full extent of his love**” (John 13:1). In first century Palestine, the roads were very hot and dusty. Most of the people wore sandals which offered little protection from the dirty roads at that time. As a result, when people arrived anywhere their feet were very dirty and needed to be cleaned. So the custom of the time was for *a house servant* to wash the feet of visitors before the beginning of a meal. In this case, however, Jesus – demonstrating true servant hood- washed His disciples’ feet. Through this action Jesus showed His disciples the extent of His love. Because of His love for His disciples, Jesus was concerned about all of their needs, and He was willing to do whatever was necessary to provide for their needs. This even included taking on the role of a servant and washing His disciples’ feet.

Second, by washing His disciples’ feet Jesus showed that God the Father “**had put all things under his power**” (John 13:3). In this world, power is the opposite of service. People who have power are served, and people who do not have power serve those who have power. But Jesus taught that in the case of Christian leadership, *power is shown through service*.

- In Matthew 20:25-28 Jesus said to His disciples: “*You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*”

Jesus taught that Christian leaders exercise authority by giving themselves **to meet the real needs of other people**. *It is through acts of service based in love that Christian leaders encourage other people to follow Christ.* – (Read this sentence again. Now think about it. Do you believe its true?)

- It through the giving of themselves that Christian leaders empower other people to use their own talents and spiritual gifts for the benefit of the church and the Kingdom of God. Are you starting to see a theme here? You, as a believer in Christ **are** a follower of Christ (Lk. 9:23) – as a follower of Christ you are compelled to lead others to see and fall in love with your Savior *because* the world is watching how you act and live your life, how you love well and lead well *for their* benefit.

What are two things that Jesus did for His disciples by washing their feet?

First, Jesus served His disciples by 1) **meeting a real need**. Jesus disciples really had dirty feet; their feet needed to be washed. So Jesus washed their feet. Christian leaders follow Jesus’ example of serving other people by meeting their needs. Jesus said, “*Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet*” (John 13:13). This does not mean that you need to literally wash other people’s feet, unless they have dirty feet. What it does

mean is that you need to be aware of the needs of your people, and then you need to commit yourself to doing what is necessary to provide for those needs. You may think, “How do I know the needs of these people? And, how can I possibly meet all of their needs by myself?” The only way that you can know the needs of other people is to know the people. In order to know them, you must intentionally reach out to them, meet them, and spend time with them. You must get to know how they think and feel. You need to know about their lives. You need to know about both the good things in their lives and their problems. You need to know where they are on their spiritual journey. Then you will know what they need and how you can help them.

Second, Jesus gave His disciples an example to follow. As the leader you are responsible to meet their needs, but this does not mean that you have to meet all of their needs by yourself. Jesus taught that that to be effective in ministry, 2) **we must multiply the ministry**. As we see the needs of others, we are to invite others into helping meet those needs, using their gifts to make an impact on God’s kingdom. This is leadership at its finest: (Seeing others’ needs and asking others to help meet those needs).

Jesus did not continually wash His disciples’ feet. Rather, He taught them to wash each other’s feet. Jesus said to them, “*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you*” (John 13:15). In the same way, you will be most effective as leader when you invite other people to meet one another’s needs. They can do this by using their spiritual gifts and abilities for ministry to one another and the whole church. The best way for you to accomplish this is for you to show other people how to serve *by faithfully serving them*. Show other people how to use their own spiritual gifts by using your spiritual gifts to serve them. Teach by example, not by command. In most cases, people will become like you by following your example. As Jesus said, “*I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor a messenger greater than the one who sent him*” (John 13:16).

In summary, John 13:1-17 teaches three important **axioms** for Christian leadership:

1. **A Christian leader submits to the authority of Jesus Christ.** Those you lead will learn about the Christian faith and life by watching you. So you can only learn how to lead others in their walk with Christ by following Jesus yourself.
2. **A Christian leader serves on the basis of love.** Since you love the people you are trying to lead, you will get to know them and their personal needs. And then you will do everything possible to meet their needs. When service is based on love, no act of service is too great. Jesus said, “*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends*” (John 15:13). Jesus Himself lived out His own teaching by giving His life for us. “*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers*” (1 John 3:16).

3. A Christian leads by example. You cannot tell people what they are supposed to do. You must show what to do by doing it yourself. By watching you love and serve them, they will learn to love and serve other people as well.

Jesus told us the result of following these principles of Christian leadership in John 13:17: “*Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*” You begin the process of becoming an effective Christian leader when you commit yourself to doing what Jesus said. When you do these things you will be blessed.

Application:

1. Ask God to help you discover your ministry opportunities based on real needs around you in your home, community, and in your church.
2. Ask God to show you a specific need of a person in your life. Ask God for wisdom and empowerment to discover how to meet that need.
3. Plan an act of service to meet the person’s need.
4. Do the act of service that you have planned (follow through with your plan). As you love them, share the reason why you are serving...(Lk. 6:31; Mk. 9:41; Jn. 14:10-12)
5. Share your experience with your close friends and prayer warriors. Invite them into your next ministry opportunity.
6. Thank God for including you as you become “the hands and feet” of Christ in serving the real needs of others – in Christ’s love.

B. LEADING BY LOVING GOD’S WORD AND LIVING IT OUT LOUD

Read 1 Timothy 4:15-16:

The primary of goal of Christian leadership is to ENCOURAGE other people to become more like Christ through a process of spiritual growth (Ro. 8:29). That is the whole reason why you have spent time this semester going through these Spiritual Disciplines. As you remember how to grow in Christ and start the journey of Christian growth, then you will naturally “LEAD” other people in their own spiritual growth encouraging them to press in daily to Christ’s presence. As you learn to love God’s Word, His Truth will pour out of you into others – His grace will emanate from you.

As Christian Leaders we influence and act on behalf of Christ and His Truth (Word)

Read 1 Timothy 4:1-17:

Based on 1 Timothy 4:1-17, as a follower of Christ can you identify where in this passage we are to lead by:

1. Guarding against false teaching – Know God’s Truth, share God’s Truth, & defend it (both within the Church and outside the walls of the Church).

2. Continuing your own spiritual training
3. Helping put others' faith and hope in Christ
4. Setting an example for other believers in speech, life, love, faith and purity
5. Helping others use their spiritual gifts for ministry
6. Persevering in spiritual growth, seeking to become more like Jesus

****To lead others well, I must first lead myself well. My **Plan** to grow and share is:**

- Have I discovered my spiritual gifts? (If not take this FREE online Spiritual Gifts Inventory: <http://www.churchgrowth.org/cgi-cg/gifts.cgi?intro=1>).

- How am I using my spiritual gifts to encourage, advance, and build the Kingdom of God in my city? Does a pastor in my church know my gifts, talents, and my time? Have I offered to serve specifically within the church? Do I know where the greatest needs are in my church?
- Who in my life is keeping me accountable to serve and lead myself and others well?

CLOSING APPLICATION:

- Do a half-day retreat in which you spend time alone with God. Begin the retreat with a time of worship and Bible study. During the time of Bible study read back through all 11 sessions of the TREK 101 Spiritual Disciplines Course: Then have a personal reflection time. Ask God to guide you as you answer the following questions about yourself:

1. Have I guarded myself against false teaching?
2. What am I doing to continue by own spiritual training?
3. Is my faith and hope really in Christ? Or do I rely too much on myself, someone else, or something else?
4. Do I set an example for other believers in my speech, life, love, faith, and purity?
5. What are my spiritual gifts?
6. Do I use my spiritual gifts for ministry in order to encourage other people to grow spiritually?
7. Based on my answer to questions 1-6, what do I need to do **more** in order to continue to grow as a leader and in my own relationship to Jesus?

Conclude your half-day retreat with a time of prayer. Ask God to guide you so that you can continue to grow as a Christian and as a leader.

-- What is your plan to share what you have learned about these Christian leadership principles and all these Spiritual Disciplines with someone else?

****Look on this list on the next page and begin to plug in and serve (LEAD) through action:**

How can I serve and use my gifts and time for God's glory in North Texas and around the world?

1) Local Ministry:

- Feed the Hunger /New Directions Food Packing – twice a year at RPC
- Avalon Alzheimer's Care Facility
- Rambling Oaks Retirement Facility
- CCA Food Pantry: Staffing the pantry to assist CCA Angels in Lewisville
- CCA Kid's Eat Free Lunch Program: Provide food to needy children in Lewisville area
- Christ's Haven Orphanage: Food/Supply Drives
- Cornerstone Church: Partnering with Cornerstone to minister to the residents of South Dallas
- Cross Timbers Nursing Home
- Greater Lewisville Cares- Partner together to serve beyond the church walls
- Salvation Army of Lewisville: Soup Kitchen
- Vickery Elementary School: Adopted school to encourage teachers and assist students

To find out how and where you can serve in these areas through RPC, contact Charlie Holton: Charlie@rpcstaff.org

2) North Texas Area Church Planter Partnerships with RPC:

- Ray Harmon: City Church Prosper, TX
- Todd Hamilton: Elevation Church – Highland Village, TX

3) International:

- **Rwanda**, Africa - WorldVenture: Greg and Tori Finley, RPC Missionaries
- **Tanzania**, Africa - Inland Missions (AIM): Monica Miller, RPC Missionary
- **Belize** - Kidz Konnect for Jesus: David & Karen Rhodes (Ministry to children & Teens in Belize)
- **Vancouver**, BC, Canada – NAMB: Brad and Rhonda Forlow, Missionaries in Vancouver, BC
- **Romania** – Christian Manna Assoc.: Ben and Csilla Spinks, RPC Missionaries
- **Haiti** - CHO AIDS Home and Life Saver Orphanage in Haiti
- **China** – GWP Ministries: Paul, “Doc” Henry — China Missions in Flower Mound via Internet discipleship
- **Zambia** - Family Legacy Missions: Camp Life, Zambia — Support for orphans and at risk children
- **Nepal** - HELP Nepal Missions —Support for orphans and underprivileged children in Nepal
- **Mexico** - Proyecto Abrigo: Mexico — Build homes for homeless
- Voice of the Christian Martyr — Support for persecuted Christians around the world
- International: Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Haiti World Vision: Child / village Sponsorship
- International: World Hunger (SBTC); Disaster Relief (SBC)
- ** Look for upcoming Missions Trips to any of the RPC Sponsored Missions/ministries:
www.rockpointechurch.org/missions

LEADERSHIP = “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans12:9-13)

