



LEADERSHIP PROGRAM 2020

What Is Christian Leadership?

“Leadership is the act of influencing and serving others out of Christ’s interests in their lives so they accomplish God’s purposes for and through them,” according to Bill Lawrence, president of Leader Formation International, at Bible.org.

Christian leadership is not rooted in worldly notions of success, such as the love of money or power. Jesus Himself spoke against this when expressing the importance of serving others.

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” – Matthew 20:25-28, NKJV

Leaders are not to oppress and overpower others with their authority, like the Gentiles practiced. Instead, leaders serve others, which Jesus demonstrated when He “*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*” (Philippians 2:7-8).

Christian Leadership Principles

1. Love

God is love (1 John 4:8) and “*the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us*” (Romans 5:5). Expressing the power and influence of the love of God is difficult to overemphasize. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul famously wrote about the transformational nature of love and how it is greater than spiritual gifts like faith and hope. Jesus told His disciples that other people will know them by their love (John 13:35).

Love is central to Christianity and every Christian. Any Christian leader should be driven in his or her life by the love of God in anything that he or she does. In this light, may other people recognize the heart and motives of that leader.

2. Modesty

“We’ve all encountered the know-it-all leader, the ‘submit-or-else’ type of leader,” according to writer Brent Rinehart at *Crosswalk*.

But Proverbs 16:5 says the proud of heart are “an abomination” to God. Being arrogant does not help model or demonstrate Christ’s interests. Rather, it is in direct conflict with Christian leadership.

*Pride goes before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.
Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly,
Than to divide the spoil with the proud. – Proverbs 16:18-19*

3. Self-development

Jesus modeled self-development, according to Ron Edmondson, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky. Jesus often “constantly slipped away to spend time with God.”

One of the most striking examples of this is when Jesus prayed in the garden at Gethsemane just before His arrest. Jesus knew “all things that would come upon Him” (John 18:4), including the painful flogging and crucifixion. This caused intense anguish and sorrow, which is evident from Luke’s account. Luke, who was a physician, was the only writer in the gospels to describe Jesus’ sweat as blood — referring to a rare condition called hematomidrosis.

And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. – Luke 22:41-44

Christian leaders can follow Jesus’ example of seeking God for insight into His will and for strength. Becoming more righteous is a lifelong process for all Christians, and leaders need to make time to grow spiritually.

4. Motivation

Instead of misleading or exploiting people, good leaders motivate others, Grunlan said.

In Nehemiah 2:17, “Nehemiah fearlessly motivated the people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,” Grunlan wrote. “He laid out a vision, he shared a plan and he reassured God’s people that God was with them. When we are moving people for our benefit, we manipulate and exploit them. But when we call people to a higher purpose, we motivate them.”

5. Correction

Correcting others in the right way is important for all Christians. Many passages in Scripture speak to this principle, as the following examples illustrate:

“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” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all” (1 Thessalonians 5:13-14).

“But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may

know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (2 Timothy 2:23-26).

How can Christian leaders approach correcting others in the right way? Lawrence offers the following tips:

- By understanding their temperaments
- By respecting their concerns
- By believing in their gifts
- By supporting their dreams
- By challenging their flaws

6. Integrity

Good leaders practice and value integrity.

*Righteous lips are the delight of kings,
And they love him who speaks what is right. – Proverbs 16:13*

“People don’t follow leaders who lack integrity,” Grunlan said. “Integrity involves actions as well as words. Now, I am not so much referring to things like *not stealing* as I am to *hypocrisy*. Integrity involves practicing what we preach, being consistent and dependable, doing what we say we will do and living in such a way that others will trust us.”

7. Follower of God’s Will

“Is there anything more important in a leader than he or she seeking God’s direction?” Rinehart asked. “A good leader seeks the Lord, commits his way to the Lord and the Lord establishes the next steps.”

*The preparations of the heart belong to man,
But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. ...
Commit your works to the LORD,
And your thoughts will be established. ...
A man’s heart plans his way,
But the LORD directs his steps. – Proverbs 16:1, 3, 9*