



Introduction

At my father's funeral last week, I saw my cousin, Fred. He is now in his late sixties, but when he was a very young man he planted a Baptist church in the Atlanta area. He is getting ready to retire and I asked him what he was going to do with all his time. I asked him if he was considering planting another church. He said, "No. I am an elder at my church and I will preach occasionally to give the pastor a break, but I don't want to lead a church. Churches need good men behind the pastor." He is a leader in his church, but not the lead pastor. There are different levels of leadership. Not everyone can be the CEO or manager of a company. Not everyone can be the Lead Pastor. In the book of Exodus, Moses was leading the people of Israel in the wilderness. He was wearing himself out dealing with all the problems of the people. His father-in-law, Jethro, visited and observed what he was doing. Then, he gave Moses some counsel. He told him to appoint leaders of ten, fifty, hundreds, and thousands. He recognized that there are different levels of leaders. Some have the capability of leading thousands, and some only have the ability to lead a few others. My cousin is probably not a leader of thousands but of tens, and recognized that he is a better leader in a secondary role than in the primary role. But, he is still a leader.

(Ex 18:21) "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place *these* over them *as* leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens."

Not everyone can be the Leader in your home. God made the man the head of his household. He is the leader. Many men do not feel qualified to lead, or feel that they are effective leaders, but God has called them to lead their wives and children. All of us are called to lead, but not all are called to lead in a primary role. Your wife is a leader, but not the head of the house. God wants all of us to lead effectively in whatever role or capacity He has called us to. I am going to use the acronym LEADER. The L is for Leads and Follows. The E is for Example. The A is for Action. The D is for Diligence. The E is for Energetic. The R is for Reproduces. The S is for Serves.

L – Leads and Follows

E – Example

A – Action

D – Diligence

E – Energetic

R – Reproduces

S – Serves

L – Leads and Follows

The first point I want to make about leading is we must also be followers. How many of you would agree that Jesus was a great leader? He was the greatest leader, and yet He was submitted to the Father. In John 5:19 He said, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.*" In John 5:30, He said, "*I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*" Jesus was submitted to the Father. He was not doing His own thing, but the will of the Father. In John 6:38, He said, "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him sent Me.*" A good leader should not be self-willed but a person who is also submitted.

(John 5:19) “Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”

(John 5:30) “I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

(John 6:38) “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

In Paul’s letter to Titus, he told him to ordain pastors in every city on the island of Crete. One of the qualifications that he gave Titus was to find men that were not self-willed. We need leaders that are seeking God’s will in their own life, in the life of the church members. Jesus is the Head of the church, and leaders in the church need to seek His will, not their own will.

(Titus 1:7) “For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, **not self-willed**, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,”

Paul was a man who was submitted to others. Doctrinally, when there was an issue, he went to the apostles in Jerusalem and then he passed on their decision to all the churches that he planted. He was submitted to them. He was sent out by the church at Antioch. After Barnabas and Paul finished their first apostolic journey, they went back to Antioch and reported back to them.

In Matthew 4:19, Jesus said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” I would have no problem following Christ because He was not self-willed. Jesus was submitted to the Father in all things. He did nothing on His own. In 1 Corinthians 11:1-3, Paul told the Corinthians to be imitators of him, just as he was of Christ. I would have no problem following or imitating Paul because he was submitted to Christ and imitating Christ. Too many people in leadership today are self-willed and not accountable to others.

(Matt 4:19) “And He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”

(1 Cor 11:1) “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”

When a leader follows God, He will spend time seeking God’s will. Jesus went before the Father and got vision and direction from Him. Jesus prayed to the Father about all things, saying, “Not My will, but Thy will be done.” People have no problem following someone who is not self-willed. God wants us to lead, but He also wants us to follow Him, or those in authority over us.

I want to take a quick look at a leader in the Old Testament. As a young man, Joshua followed and apprenticed under Moses. When Moses went into the tent of meeting to meet with God, young Joshua also went into the tent of meeting. Oftentimes, when Moses left, young Joshua remained in the tent to meet with God. Joshua developed a relationship with God. Joshua grew in his knowledge of God and his ways. He followed God, and this helped him to be an effective leader of the nation of Israel. If we are going to effectively lead people, we need to know God and his ways. Good leaders are going to seek God first in their lives, and help others to seek God.

(Ex 33:11) “Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.”

E – Example

The primary way for leaders to lead is by example. There are many people who try to lead by ordering everyone around. They use their force and power to make people do things. In 1 Peter 5, Peter gave three exhortations to pastors, who are leaders in the churches. He told them to shepherd the flock with the right motive, the right mindset, and the right method. What was the right method for church leaders? It was to lead by example.

(1 Pet 5:3) “nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

Jesus spoke to His disciples about the way that they were to lead others. He warned them against lording over people, but to humbly serve others. When Jesus washed the disciples feet in John 13, He was doing the job of the lowest servant. Afterwards, He told them that He had set an example for them to follow. Jesus was leading by example, rather than Lording over them.

(Matt 20:25-28) “But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. {26} It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, {27} and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; {28} just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

(John 13:12-15) “So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined *at the table* again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? {13} You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for *so* I am. {14} If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. {15} **For I gave you an example** that you also should do as I did to you.”

Good leaders lead by example, and it is natural for people to follow them and do the things that they are doing. When Jesus said, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men, He was fishing for me. When Paul said to people to be imitators of him, he was imitating Jesus. When Jesus washed the disciples feet, He was setting an example for us. God wants us to be servants, not lords, and to lead by example.

In Matthew 23, Jesus came down hard on the Pharisees. He told His disciples to do what they said, but not to do what they did. The Pharisees told people to do things that they were not doing themselves. They were hypocrites and were not leading by example. Good leaders lead by example.

(Matt 23:3) “therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them.”

In Joshua 23-24, Joshua was giving his farewell address. He had been leading God’s people into the Promised Land and was recounting their history. In Joshua 24:14, he exhorts the people to fear the Lord and to serve Him in sincerity and truth, and to put away the foreign gods. Then, he puts a choice before them of serving God or serving the gods of the Amorites. Then, he tells them his choice. He said, “but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua is leading his own family, and his family is going to serve God. He is also exhorting the people to follow God. Notice their response in verse 16. “The people answered and said, ‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods.’”

(Josh 24:14-16) “Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. {15} If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” {16} The people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods;"

A – Action

How many of you have heard that if you want something done, give it to a busy man? I have heard that. That saying is really just speaking about people of action. There are some who talk about things but don't get them done. Others are men of action and get things done. Leaders are people who get things done. Nobody wants to follow people who are ineffective in getting things done. People want to see progress and if they don't see the leaders moving things forward, they can get impatient and stop following.

Earlier we saw that Jesus did what He saw the Father doing. Whatever God showed Him, He did. Jesus was a man of action. In the book of James, he wrote for us to not be merely hearers, but doers of the word. Real leaders see things in the Word of God and apply it to their lives. Real leaders see things that need to be done and get it done.

(James 1:22) “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”

In Proverbs 6 Solomon exhorted us to learn from the ants. The ants did not need a chief, officer, or ruler. The ants did whatever work needed to get done without anyone making them. Solomon used three different words to describe leaders. The first is qatsin, which is translated as chief. A chief sees what needs to be done. He gets vision and then does whatever is needed. The second term is shoter, which is translated as officer. This is an administrative leader. He makes sure that everything is documented and organized. A lack of organization makes us ineffective leaders. Being organized frees us up to take action. The third term is mashal, which is translated as ruler. This type of leader makes sure that the work gets done. He stands over you and micro manages others. God does not want any of us to need others to tell us what needs to be done. He does not want us to wait for others to get us organized. He does not want us to wait for others to make us do things. God wants us to be men of action who see what needs to be done, and then get it done with a spirit of excellence. Good leaders are visionary, organized, and men of action.

(Pro 6:6-8) “Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, {7} Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, {8} Prepares her food in the summer And gathers her provision in the harvest.”

D – Diligence

The fourth characteristic of a leader is diligence. In Romans 12:8, Paul wrote that those who lead, should lead with diligence. Both the KJV and NASB use the word diligence. The ESV uses the word zeal. The Greek word is spoude, which means speed, haste, earnestness, eagerness, or diligence. A leader needs to have some passion and zeal about what he does.

(Rom 12:8) “Or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Paul was a great leader, who was passionate, eager, and zealous. We can learn a lot from the way that he lived his life and fulfilled his calling. We can also say that he had purpose and was very determined or diligent and determined to finish his course. Paul lived his life with great determination. One of my favorite verses about Paul is in his letter to the Colossians. In Colossians 1:28-29, he said, “*we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.*” Paul lived with a sense of purpose. He labored to the point of agony to accomplish the purpose that he had received from God. The Greek word for striving is *agonizomai* (Strong’s G75), which means to fight or contend for a prize. In many of the Greek games, it was a literal fight to death, and we get our English word agony from this Greek word. Paul’s pursuit of his goal was agonizing or painful. Paul was a very determined man.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 that he was running his race in such a way as to win the prize. He was running in such a way, as not without aim. He was boxing in such a way, as not beating the air. He was disciplining his body and making it a slave so that he could win souls. Paul ran this way because he was determined.

(1 Cor 9:24-27) “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. {25} Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. {26} Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; {27} but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.”

To be a leader with determination, you have to be determined about something, not just anything, but something that you are willing to lay your life down for. In Acts 9, Paul had a vision on the way to Damascus that changed his life. God revealed Himself to him and then told Paul that he was a chosen instrument to take the gospel to the Gentiles. In Acts 26:19-20, Paul is giving his defense before King Agrippa and he said, “I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision...” To be leaders we must have vision. We must know what we are called to do and then pursue it with determination.

(Acts 26:19-20) “So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, {20} but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.”

Jesus lived His life with purpose. He said in Luke 4:43 that He must preach the kingdom of God, for He was sent for that purpose. He had vision for His life and did not deviate from that course. In John 12:27, He was praying to the Father and was troubled in His soul. He knew that He was about to be arrested and crucified. He did not want to go through it, but He said, “But for this purpose I came to this hour.” He was determined to fulfill the purpose the Father had sent Him to accomplish.

(Luke 4:43) “But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.”

(John 12:27) “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.”

Earlier this week Chad and I were driving together and he told me that he had read Proverbs 29:18 that morning about those who follow the Law are happy. I had probably set my cruise control, which helps me drive the legal speed limit. I quoted the rest of the verse to him. I said, “*Where there is no vision, people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the Law.*” The KJV says that without vision people perish, but I think the NASB is more accurate here. The Hebrew word for perish or unrestrained is pawrah (Strong’s H6544), which means to loosen, or to make naked. People without vision live loosely without any constraints. They don’t live like Paul did, who disciplined and buffeted his body. Paul had vision and purpose and lived his life with determination. According to that verse, I believe Paul was much happier than those who lived without purpose and determination. Those who live a disciplined life are happy because they receive joy in accomplishing the purpose for which they have been sent.

For us to be the leaders that God wants us to be, we must know where we are going. We must know what He has called us to do. Then, like Paul and Jesus, we must live our lives with determination to fulfill God’s purpose in our lives. It will require hard work and discipline. It will be agonizing at times. But, we must lead with determination.

E – Enthusiasm

Leaders are enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is contagious. When you have a zeal, passion, and enthusiasm, others can catch it. You can’t teach enthusiasm; it must be caught. I love the word enthusiasm. It comes from two Greek words: En + Theo, which literally means possessed by God. When someone is possessed by God, they get excited. The way that God possesses us is by His Holy Spirit. When someone is full of the Holy Spirit, they are full of life, zeal, excitement and enthusiasm.

In Acts 6, the church was looking for some leaders to put in charge of serving the widows in the church. These were the first deacons or servants in the church. What did they ask for? They asked for men of good reputation, full of Spirit and wisdom. They wanted more than just a good reputation. They wanted godly men who were full of the Holy Spirit. They wanted enthusiastic men to lead this ministry.

(Acts 6:3) “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.”

Men who are enthusiastic are full of joy. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is joy. Joy is contagious. If you have a church full of the joy of the Lord, people will want to come back. Others want to be around happy and joyful people. People want to be around leaders that are full of joy and enthusiasm.

R – Reproduces

In Matthew 28, Jesus said that all authority had been given to Him, and He then proceeded to give the apostles a mandate: to go and make disciples of all the nations. The term, disciple, is used 269 times in the New Testament. The apostles did exactly that, they made disciples. We find for example, in Acts 6:7, that the number of disciples continued to increase greatly. We find

in Acts 6:2 that the twelve apostles summoned the congregation of the disciples. I don't see too many congregations of disciples. There is not a lot of discipleship today. But, leaders make disciples; they are disciples and they make disciples.

(Matt 28:18-20) "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. {19} Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, {20} teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

(Acts 6:2) "So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables."

(Acts 6:7) "The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith."

Jesus modeled what He commanded us to do. As Jesus began His earthly ministry, He gathered disciples. In Matthew 4:19, He said, "Follow Me..." In Mark 6:1 Jesus went to His hometown, Capernaum, and His disciples followed Him. His disciples accompanied Him wherever He went. He taught and mentored them. The Greek word for disciple is mathete, (Strong's G3101), and it means learner or pupil. They were learning from Jesus, who was discipling them.

(Mark 6:1) "Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him."

The Apostle Paul made disciples. He would take men under him and mentor them. In Acts 16, Paul went to Derbe and Lystra and found a disciple there by the name of Timothy. Paul wanted Timothy to go with him, so he took Timothy with him from that point on. Timothy became part of Paul's apostolic team. One Bible scholar that I respect said that Paul raised up thirty-five people to be part of his ministry team. Paul made disciples, which is what leaders do. They don't try to do all the work. They equip others to do the work.

(Acts 16:1-3) "Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, {2} and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. {3} Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek."

In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he told him, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2) Paul was essentially giving Timothy the same command that Jesus gave to His disciples. He wanted Timothy to pour into other men, just as He had poured into Timothy.

S – Serves

In Luke 22, Jesus' disciples were having a dispute about which one of them was regarded to be the greatest. These were the future leaders of the church, and they were caught up in a prideful dispute over who was regarded as the greatest.

(Luke 22:24-27) “And there arose also a dispute among them *as to* which one of them was regarded to be greatest. {25} And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' {26} "But *it is* not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. {27} "For who is greater, the one who reclines *at the table* or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines *at the table*? But I am among you as the one who serves.”

Jesus stepped in and said that the kings of the Gentiles lord over them, but it is not this way with you. The way that leaders in the kingdom of God operate is different than the way that the kingdoms on earth operate. We saw earlier in Peter’s word to pastors that we are not to lord over the flock but to lead by example, which is what Jesus did. In John 13 he had stripped down and washed their feet, and then said that He had given them an example to follow. The example He gave them was to be a servant. He became the lowest servant of a household, which was to wash the feet of those that entered. Jesus was a servant-leader, and that is what He was telling His disciples to be. Luke 22 is the parallel account of John 13, and in this account, He said the greatest among them must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. The youngest is the role that He had just taken as an example to them. Then, He said, “I am among you as the one who serves.” He made it clear that He had been their leader, but He had also been the one who served them.

In Mark 10:45, we read that Jesus, the Son of Man, did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. Jesus was the ultimate example of a servant-leader.

(Mark 10:45) “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 1 Corinthians 3, the church at Corinth was having a similar dispute. They were squabbling about being of Paul, Apollos, or Peter. Paul addresses the division and tells them that they were just servants to whom the Lord had given an opportunity. Paul had planted the church and then Apollos watered the church plant. In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul continued and asked the church to regard them as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. The most common word for servant is diakonos, which means a waiter or server. The most common word for bond-servant is doulos, which is literally a slave. The word here is huperetes, which means an underoarsman. It is the lowest of slaves, and it was an option given to men who were sentenced to die. They could be put to death, or they could become an underoarsman on a ship where they would be chained to their station and serve their remaining days as a slave doing hard, manual, labor. Paul said that he and Apollos were the lowest type of slaves.

(1 Cor 3:4-5) “For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? {5} What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.”

(1 Cor 4:1) “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

What does a servant-leader look like? I believe there are two kinds of service needed in churches? There are necessary jobs and there are desirable jobs. A necessary job is one that must be done, like cleaning bathrooms or preparing communion. In a home, we all changed diapers. It was a necessary job with children. It was not something anyone felt a particular call to do, or

even supernaturally gifted to do the job. We just did it when it needed to be done. Everyone in the family changed diapers. Then, there were favorite jobs. My daughter, Amy, loved to cook, so she tried to cook whenever possible. She is still a great cook. In the church, God has a place for everyone. In Ephesians 4:16, we are told that every joint must supply. I believe that everyone in the body is a different member of the body with different gifts, abilities, and desires. Each member needs to feel valued and appreciated. I believe that leadership needs to help the various members of the body find their place in the body and release them to serve. If someone is called to teach or lead, and yet they are never given the opportunity to serve in those capacities, the person will be unfulfilled and will eventually lose interest in the body. So, we want to help identify the gifts and abilities of people, equip them to use and serve the body with their gifts, and release them. But, there are still those necessary jobs that need to be done. As servants, we want to serve in the areas that we are gifted in, but also serve in the things that need to be done. We must be willing to be the youngest or least and serve in that capacity.



Introduction (Ex 18:21)

L – Leads and Follows (John 5:19, 5:30, 6:38, Titus 1:7, Matt 4:19, 1 Cor 11:1-3, Ex 33:11)

E – Example (1 Pet 5:3, Matt 20:25-28, John 13:12-15, Matt 23:3, Josh 24:14-16)

A – Action (James 1:22, Pr 6:6-8)

D – Diligence (Rom 12:8, Col 1:28-29, 1 Cor 9:24-27, Acts 26:19-20, Luke 4:43, John 12:27, Pr 29:18)

E – Enthusiasm (Acts 6:3)

R – Reproduces (Acts 6:2, 6:7, Matt 28:18-20, Mark 6:1, Acts 16:1-3, 2 Tim 2:2)

S – Serves (Luke 22:24-27, John 13, Mark 10:45, 1 Cor 3:4-5, 4:1, Eph 4:16)