



# LEADING BY EXAMPLE

## LEADERSHIP [WHAT CHARACTERIZES A GOOD LEADER?]

### THE HURDLE

*Being on the team gives me opportunity to influence people, but I wonder if I'm really making the kind of difference I want to make. I guess I'm still not exactly sure what it means to be a leader. If I'm not a high scorer, the captain, the most popular, the most vocal, or the one getting media attention, can I still be a leader on the team? In my years on the team, I've seen some of my teammates play a ton and others not play at all, so playing time doesn't seem like it's the key issue when it comes to impact. But even if I play all the time, I'm still not clear what it means to be an effective leader.*

If someone asked you, "What is leadership?", what would you say?

In what ways do you see yourself as a leader?

“

***It's easy to make a buck.  
It's a lot tougher to make a  
difference.***

*Tom Brokaw,  
Former news anchor*

”

### I HEAR YA

The Bible records an assortment of different leaders, some who were ultimately commended, others who were rebuked...

**David:** And David shepherded them (God's people, Israel) with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them. (Psalms 78:72)

**Solomon:** "I undertook great projects; I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them ... I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem ... and again, all was vanity and chasing after wind." (Ecclesiastes 2:4-11)

**Pharisees:** (Jesus speaking) "Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit." (Matthew 15:14)

**Joshua:** (Moses speaking) "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them." (Joshua 1:6)

**King Baasha:** (God speaking) "I lifted you up from the dust and made you a leader of my people Israel, but you ... caused my people Israel to sin and to provoke me to anger by their sins." (1 Kings 16:2)

**Gideon:** "Watch me. Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of camp, do exactly as I do." (Judges 7:17)

## LISTEN UP

Jesus explains how His followers should lead in Mark 10:35-45. *Note: The probable context of this passage finds Jesus and the disciples heading toward Jerusalem in the final days of Jesus' earthly life.*

1. Thinking that Jesus might be ready to set up his earthly kingdom, James and John, two of Jesus' twelve disciples, ask Jesus to grant them positions of power, influence, and prestige in his kingdom hierarchy. Do you think this is an appropriate request? Why or why not?
2. How did Jesus respond to the request? Are you surprised that Jesus answered James and John in this way? Explain.
3. When the other ten disciples heard the request that James and John made, how did they respond? Why would they be indignant (angry, offended, resentful)? Do you think they were justified in feeling this way? Why or why not?
4. Jesus used the request to teach the twelve about his model for leadership. Using the chart below, identify the different characteristics of leadership for each model according to this passage.

Model of the "Rulers of the Gentiles."	Model of Those who Follow Jesus

5. Jesus' model is contrary to our typical notions of leadership. Do you think His approach works in general? In the sports world? Why or why not?

## FOR THE RECORD

"Not so with you." With these four words, Jesus exhorts his followers to distinguish themselves from those embracing the world's system of leadership. While others clamor for titles, position, and power, Jesus teaches (and models with his own life) that true leadership is about service—pouring out one's life on behalf of others. As we follow Christ, he transforms our character to be more like His

own, an inside-out renovation that enables a completely different approach to life. When Jesus marks our character in this way, we can leave a legacy that lasts long after the scoreboard is forgotten. Leadership marked by service always leaves a distinct impression on those who are served—and God gets the glory! Christ-followers lead by serving others!



## YOUR MOVE

1. “If the high road of leadership doesn’t take you across the low road of servanthood, you need to get some new directions.” (Anonymous)

a. Are you on the road serving others or on the road seeking to be served by others?

b. What would it look like for you to live more consistently on the low road of servanthood?

c. Identify what might be keeping you from that road.

“

***We are never more like Jesus than when we serve others.***

*Duane Elmer  
Author/Teacher*

”

2. While leadership is taking responsibility to influence others, the most difficult person to lead is yourself. What immediate adjustments would make you more effective in leading your own life? Check all that apply.

- Making more purposeful decisions with my time
- Not wasting as much time on the television, games, computer, etc.
- Being more concerned about others’ needs than my own accomplishments
- Growing in confidence in my own strengths and working on my weaknesses
- Learning about what godly leadership really looks like
- Spending more time with people who are having a positive influence on others

3. Many times in his life, Jesus assumed the role of servant. In John 13:1-17, Jesus chooses the towel (symbol of humility, others-centeredness, help) rather than the robe (symbol of power, authority, status). Among your teammates and opponents, how could you compete with God-honoring intensity and still reflect the servant qualities of Christ?

4. “Lord, I give you my \_\_\_\_\_ that keeps me from really serving others. Help me to be more like Christ, even in sports.”

For additional work, on your own, visit **The Training Room** on the next page to learn more about effective servant leadership.

# AS YOU ENTER

“HE LEADS THE HUMBLE IN JUSTICE, AND HE TEACHES THE HUMBLE HIS WAY.”  
(PSALM 25:9)

## Leadership Training Session 1

Read Philippians 2:1-11.

- a. How does the author contrast self-centered leadership with servant leadership?
- b. What choices did Jesus make while living out his role as servant?
- c. What is most challenging to you in this passage?

## Leadership Training Session 2

Read Hebrews 12:1-3.

- a. What character traits are listed in this passage?
- b. Servant leadership is marked by challenge. What challenges might you encounter in your leadership journey?
- c. In what ways does Jesus give us encouragement to keep going in the servant leadership process?

## Qualities of a Leader

In his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey teaches about ways to develop as a leader. Look over the list below and see where you are doing well and consider ways to improve yourself as a leader.

**Habit 1.** Be proactive. Take personal responsibility for yourself vs. reactive by blaming others.

**Habit 2.** Begin with the end in mind. Set long-term goals and a vision for your life.

**Habit 3.** Put first things first. Set short-term goals that support your priorities in life.

**Habit 4.** Think Win/Win. Have an attitude where others can benefit as much as you.

**Habit 5.** Seek first to understand, then be understood. Listen and empathize before giving advice.

**Habit 6.** Synergize. Work in teams to solve problems, make decisions, and share strengths.

**Habit 7.** Sharpen the saw. Take care of yourself with a balanced life in all areas of development.

# AS YOU LEAVE

- » CONSISTENTLY SEEK OUT WAYS TO SERVE OTHERS.
- » SERVE IN YOUR STRENGTHS AND GROW IN YOUR AREAS OF WEAKNESS.
- » BE AROUND OTHER PEOPLE WHO MODEL CHRIST-LIKE LEADERSHIP.