



LESSON #3 The Qualifications of a Leader

“Leadership in any arena is not for the thin skinned. If you are quickly offended or your feelings are easily hurt by what your critics say or do, you will not survive. Leading the people who are looking to you for direction is not child's play—it's serious business and that's why there are so few true leaders. The fragile lives of the people you lead are in your hands. If you fail, they fail. If you quit, they quit. If you try, they try. If you succeed, they succeed. Their progress is your reward for the high price of leadership.”

Not all Kingdom leaders qualify under God’s terms —some quit under the pressure of adversity, as it states in Proverbs 24:10, ***“If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small”***. In other words, only those who will endure qualify for leadership.

Priscilla Shier, who played Elizabeth in the powerful movie *“WAR ROOM”* was warned by the Kendrick Brothers that if she accepted the role, she and her family would face the attack of the enemy to hinder and even stop the movie. She agreed and did not realize the intensity and seriousness of the warning as attack after attack came upon them. If you saw the movie, you know that she persevered and the movie has blessed and strengthened God’s people in the area of prayer. She faced the adversity through the strength she found in the Lord.

What are some areas of adversity that leaders face and must overcome?

The word, ‘Qualification’ means- ***“to receive authority, license or power by fulfilling required conditions”***

Let me illustrate this point—the church that I pastor, Freedom Life Church has members on our leadership team who hold ministry credentials with PILLAR OF FIRE CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL, and as they continue to meet the required conditions, they qualify to maintain their “*member in good standing*” status. If for any reason, Pillar of Fire deems that they no longer qualify due to failure of honouring the set conditions, they lose that status.

1 Timothy 3 gives an extensive list of qualifications for a pastor—if I’m not fulfilling those conditions, then I should not be directing a church. God holds leaders to a higher standard and rightly so, for we can misrepresent the holy standards of God and become a stumbling block to those who follow us. Many well known spiritual leaders who led major ministries have even recently become disqualified for that very reason. What can disqualify a leader from ministry?

A CASE STUDY IN THE LEADERSHIP OF MOSES

Moses was one of God’s choice leaders in the Old Testament. For 40 long, tenuous years, he faithfully led the children of Israel through the desert on their enduring journey to the Promised Land—and then after finally arriving at the Jordan River, Moses was shocked to hear God inform him that he would not be crossing over with the very people he brought there. God forcefully told him, “*Moses, you’re not going*”. Why would this dedicated man of God be disqualified from entering Canaan, and receiving his promised inheritance? Did he not do what God commissioned him to do? Yes, but God's honour and glory has its limit to what He tolerates regarding disobedience and presumption among His chosen leaders. At a desperate time in the dry wilderness when water was not available, Moses, in anger, failed to speak to the rock as God commanded him for water to quench the thirst of the Israelites. In his rage, Moses smote the rock and the bible records that by doing so, he failed to sanctify the Lord in the eyes of the people. In other words, Moses cheapened the holy character of God through unbelief and God’s spotless, perfect reputation was tarnished by Moses’ carnal display.

Numbers 20:12 records, “***And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron, Because you believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.***”

That one act of sin disqualified Moses, not from Heaven, but from the land of milk and honey. In Deuteronomy 3, Moses made a last attempt to persuade God to grant him entry to the land along with his fellow Jews, but God's strict reply put an end to the appeal- ***“Speak no more unto Me of this matter.”*** To our natural sense of justice, God's reaction could seem harsh and unwarranted, but the necessary fear of the Lord among His people was jeopardized by Moses' careless action which God saw as a form of rebellion.

“For you rebelled against My commandment in the desert...to sanctify Me at the water before their eyes...” Numbers 27:14

80 years earlier, Moses' anger got the better of him when he killed an Egyptian, and yet God did not disqualify him at that point from his destiny of delivering Israel from bondage—the very reason he was born. Moses was not yet fit to lead. It took another 40 years for God to get his man qualified. Let that sink in. This is a strong lesson that the greater, more noble place of leadership that God honours you with comes with a higher degree of accountability which we will examine in another lesson.

Leadership in God's house is not child's play. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, James defends why leadership must be entered into with the utmost seriousness.

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we (leaders) shall receive a stricter judgment.” James 3:1

That is the reason we are not to install novices into a leadership role until they're spiritually mature. Jesus laid out the *rule of responsibility* in Luke 12:48 that ***“to whom much is given shall much be required”***. Explain what this crucial statement means to you personally.

7 QUALIFICATIONS OF A LEADER—

#1. ABILITY--God equips His leaders with the ability and skill to be successful in their ministry role. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-12 the various roles and purposes of leadership in the church. ***“He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”***

If you lack the fundamental ability to carry out your ministry effectively in the church, you are in the wrong ministry position. Name the primary ability or skill that God has given you to fulfill your ministry.

#2. DILIGENCE—‘Diligence’ means “*earnest and persistent application to an undertaking*”. In other words, you are a leader that sticks at it! You don’t easily give up, you don’t waver and you’re not double minded.

Romans 12:8 instructs us, “*If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, do it diligently*”. Stick at it!

Peter assures us that our diligence will keep us moving forward, avoiding pitfalls in our heavenly calling. “*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall*”.
2 Peter 1:10 Stick at it!

Proverbs 12:24 also declares the necessity for diligence in leadership—
“*The hand of the diligent will rule, but the negligent and lazy will be put to forced labour.*” Stick at it! In what areas are you needing to be more diligent?

#3. HUMILITY—This can be a high hurdle to overcome for leaders as it pricks the flesh and wounds the ego. A spirit of humility is a major qualifier for the leader in God’s house. Our carnal nature as a leader loves to be recognized among our peers and followers. There is nothing sinful about receiving a compliment from one who is blessed by our ministry, so long as we deflect the praise to God with a humble heart. That is why Proverbs 27:2 warns us to “*Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth*”. Don’t play the false humility role, “*Oh no, it’s not me!*” If it’s not you, who is it? Just say thank you and give God the glory! There will be occasions when people want to bless you as a way of thanking you—don’t make it awkward by responding, “*Oh no, you don’t have to do that*”—don’t rob them of a blessing—receive their gift in humility!

Many years ago when Julie and I were starting out in ministry, we received a letter from a woman we did not know, but somehow she heard about us and wanted to financially support our ministry. At that time, I thought it was more holy to turn her offer down. And so with false humility, I responded to her to just pray for us

and keep her money. We never heard from her again! Lesson learned—receive a blessing in true humility. How do you react when people sincerely thank you for your ministry?

#4. TRANSPARENCY— A leader must be blameless—nothing to hide, nothing covered up, nothing to fear being exposed. God is not looking for perfect 24/7 performance—He is after blamelessness. In Paul’s two pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus, he references the word ‘*blameless*’ five times. In a nutshell, Paul expresses in 1 Timothy 3:2, “*A bishop then must be blameless*”. This is a prerequisite to leadership that cannot be ignored or underrated.

Leaders must be free from true up-to-date accusations regarding a sinful lifestyle, ungodly attitude, corrupt speech and immoral conduct. False accusations are a whole other matter, but blameless leaders will be transparent in every aspect of their lives as an open book. What does it mean to you to be blameless as a leader?

#5. RELIABILITY—This is a significant qualification of a man or woman who is fully “*dependable and trustworthy*”. Are you a man or woman of your word? Do you make every effort to keep your commitment with others? Can you be relied on to be there when you say you’re going to be there? An outstanding leader in God’s house has gained the reputation of being reliable. In what way are you reliable?

#6. HOSPITALITY—This is absolutely essential qualification for leaders. The gift of hospitality is a must for those who serve the body of Christ, beginning in their own home. In my observations over the years, I have noticed that hospitality is not nearly as practised among Christians as it once was. Our lives today have unfortunately become extremely busy and out of order, and with that comes a physical and mental weariness that depletes the desire to be around people.

Sadly, the very thought of ministering to others through hospitality in our homes can be upsetting, leaving us feeling anxious. This is a curse that we must take control of, for the art of hospitality is meant to be a tremendous blessing to both parties, the servers and the served. Hospitality among leaders enriches the bonds of fellowship, unity, love, prayer, joy and many other virtues. The apostle Peter tells us to “*Practise hospitality one to another without complaining*” 1 Peter 4:9.

What meaningful and practical measures can you take to help in the practice of hospitality as a leader?

#7. COURAGE—The Bible uses the phrase, *“Be strong and of good courage”* 9 different times. 5 of those 9 times were spoken directly to Joshua by Moses and by God Himself—when? At the greatest and most crucial time of his leadership. Joshua 1 reveals the emergence of new leadership among the children of Israel as they are about to enter the Promised Land. The former leadership under Moses was now complete and God raised up his servant Joshua to take the reins once held by Moses. This required great courage in the face of the unknown as they were about to cross over into a whole new destination where they had never gone before. God sensed the natural fear in Joshua, and calmed his spirit with this powerful promise of His faithfulness to be with Joshua in this new journey of intense leadership.

“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of a good courage” Joshua 1:5-6

Joshua was now fully qualified for the enormous task that was thrust upon him—no longer would he have Moses to lean on or to receive encouragement and counsel. He would have to rely upon God and God alone. In what areas of your past or present ministry have you required courage to step out into unfamiliar territory?

It is necessary for God at the right time to remove the support systems in our lives that we have always depended on to be there in difficult times. He will raise you up and give you the courage to move forward in your leadership into the unknown of your destiny! Be strong and of a good courage, for He will not fail you or forsake you! Amen. Your courage will instil courage in the hearts of your followers.