

THE LEADERSHIP OF CHURCH ELDERS

Volume 1

Section 6



General Conference
Ministerial Association

“The path of men who are placed as leaders is not an easy one. But they are to see in every difficulty a call to prayer. Never are they to fail of consulting the great Source of all wisdom. Strengthened and enlightened by the Master Worker, they will be enabled to stand firm against unholy influences and to discern right from wrong, good from evil. They will approve that which God approves, and will strive earnestly against the introduction of wrong principles into His cause.”

PK 31



I- Who are the leaders?



- Leaders are those who are able to influence others.
- Leaders are the “prominent voice” within a group. Their opinion is the highest valued.



“Is a person who looks at the long term, who sets ambitious goals for the organization and who is able to keep his team excited in the pursuit of that goal.”

John Maxwell



“A person can be the head of a group and not be its leader and, conversely, can be its leader without being the boss. A boss decides what to do under the authority granted by his hierarchical position. The leader, without necessarily having such hierarchical authority,



also has the ability to decide the group's performance based upon the influence he emits, which is determined by the 'moral authority' he exerts over the rest of the team. Trust is inspired into the team members when they know that a leader is in charge of their group."

John Maxwell, 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader



1. The traditional leadership of the world

- Synonymous with *power*. Success is based on achieving *material things*.
- The end justifies the means.
- If to achieve objectives they have to crush down people, so be it.
- Achieving success is more important than upholding principles.



- The more people serve leaders, the bigger and more powerful they consider themselves.
- Pursue things like: *money, fame, social status, political greatness, popularity, etc.*
- Exert *authority over others as synonymous with greatness and success.*
- The exaltation of self is their ultimate goal.
- Generally, God is not part of their structure.



2. Spiritual leadership

- It is based on *service to others*.
- It is structured on *principles*.
- *Respect* for people is paramount.
- The goal is important to achieve, but in ways that are consistent with the will of God without abusing *human dignity*.



- Their goal is to *allow the full spiritual growth* of all participants, not just the leader.
- The most prominent features of leaders are: *humility, kindness, understanding, and a foolproof spirit of service.*



- ***Exalting God*** is their ultimate goal.
- ***Developing the gifts and talents*** of all members of the group is an important goal.
- The ***welfare of all*** is a collective feeling.
- ***God is the center*** of the organizational structure.



II- Reflections about leadership



- *“True leaders are ambassadors of hope.”*
- *“No one wants to follow a leader who thinks he is better than everyone else.”*
- *“The world has never seen a great leader who lacks commitment.”*

John Maxwell



- *“It is impossible for an entrepreneur to just let things happen.”*

Anonymous

- *“To increase growth, guide your followers; to multiply it, guide your leaders.”*

John Maxwell



- *“A leader with great passion and few skills always exceeds a leader with many skills and little passion.”*

John Maxwell

- *“Leaders who are highly competent do more than merely act at the highest level. They inspire and motivate their team to do the same.”*

R. Warren



III- Five characteristics of successful leaders




1. They know what they want

“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:12-14





*“The starting point of
any goal is to desire it.”*

Napoleon Hill

2. They strive to achieve their goal

- Without an effort, success is almost impossible to achieve.
- Without making a conscious effort, it is difficult for church elders to see realized the dreams that God has placed in their minds concerning the church they lead.



***In just one chapter the Lord
told Joshua four times:***

*“Be strong and courageous,
because you will lead these people
to inherit the land I swore to their
ancestors to give them.”*

Joshua 1:6



*“Be strong and very courageous.
Be careful to obey all the law my
servant Moses gave you; do not
turn from it to the right or to the
left, that you may be successful
wherever you go.”*

Joshua 1:7



*“Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and courageous. Do
not be afraid; do not be
discouraged, for the Lord your
God will be with you wherever
you go.”*

Joshua 1:9



*“...Only be strong
and courageous!”*

Joshua 1:18



Theodore Roosevelt said:

“There is nothing brilliant or prominent about my story except maybe this: I do the things that I believe need to be done, and when I decide to do something, I do it.”



3. They risk more in order to achieve their goal

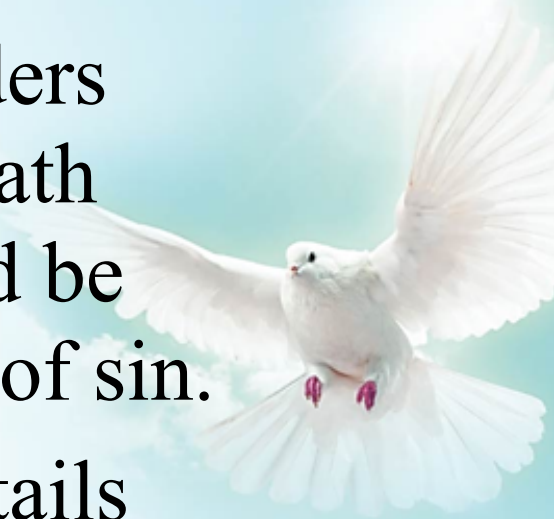
- Moses crossed the desert just to achieve a dream to free his enslaved people who were in Egypt.
- Noah stepped into the ark with his family, as the Lord had commanded, in order to preserve the human race.



- Queen Esther presented herself before the king without being called, just to free her people from a decree that sought their extermination.
- David risked his own life when he faced Goliath, just to end the humiliation to which the giant had subjected the people of God for many days.



- JESUS, the greatest of all leaders that has ever existed, faced death upon a cross so that men could be freed from the eternal slavery of sin.
- Accomplishing great goals entails risks, but when leaders conceive a dream, they should go forth without looking back, especially when it is God who has challenged them to go for the goal.



*“Just make sure that you obey,
and let God take care of you and
the possible risks of obedience.”*

*D. Doria, La Presencia de Dios
en la vida de un Líder (The
presence of God in the life of a
Leader), p. 47*



*“There are risks and costs
to action. But they are
far less than the
long range risks of
comfortable inaction.”*

John F. Kennedy



Inspiration reminds us:

*“In that important position God will have a man to venture, to risk something; to move out firmly for the right, whatever may be the consequences; to battle against obstacles, and waver not, **even though life be at stake.**”*

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4. They make mistakes trying to achieve their goal

- Moses made many mistakes trying to do his best. At some point he wanted to solve all the problems. But the Lord sent someone with wise counsel that helped to solve them.
- Good leaders also make mistakes, but God takes advantage of those flaws to correct them and guide them back to the right path.



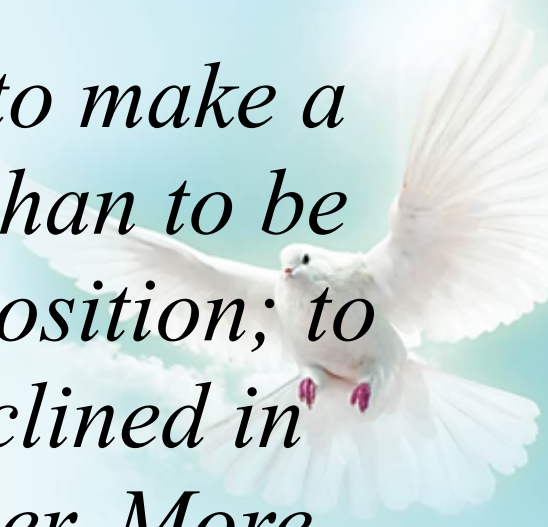
- The mistake leaders are to avoid is not doing something great just so that they do not err; that would be worse and is unjustifiable.

“The way to succeed is to double the percentage of failures.”

Thomas Watson

- *“It is even more excusable to make a wrong decision sometimes than to be continually in a wavering position; to be hesitating, sometimes inclined in one direction, then in another. More perplexity and wretchedness result from thus hesitating and doubting than from sometimes moving too hastily.”*

ChL 50



5. They seek God in order to attain their goal

We have the example of Nehemiah, that when he proposed to rebuild the walls, he sought God in prayer and made Him his partner in developing a plan and its implementation. That is why, when he received the king's approval, Nehemiah exclaimed:



*“And because the gracious
hand of my God was on me,
the king granted my requests.”*

Nehemiah 2:8



Later on when the project was finished, Nehemiah again said:

“So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.”

Nehemiah 6:15-16



Nehemiah made God his partner and when the work was done, he gave God the glory that only God deserves. This is what successful leaders do in the context of spiritual leadership.



IV- Practical advice for spiritual leaders



- Daily rebel against *mediocrity*.
- Keep yourselves *improving constantly*.
- Always seek *excellence*.
- Accomplish more than is *expected*.
- *Do not be satisfied* only achieving what is requested.



- *Inspire* others.
- *Pray* constantly.
- Do not let a day go by without *studying the Bible*.
- Do not give place to *pride in your heart*.
- Get into the habit of giving the *glory to God when you succeed*.



- Be vigilant about not letting your labor become a *routine; this could destroy you.*
- Do not forget to be *responsible about your duties.*
- *Be passionate* about your work.
- *Be practical* and use common sense.
- Keep a good sense of *humor.*



- Never start on a project without first having a *plan*.
- ***Do not underestimate yourself.** You can accomplish great goals with God's help.*
- ***Periodically evaluate*** your work.
- Do not give place in your heart to *resentment*.
- Do not work for the *applause of men*; work for the *approval of God*.



- Remember that you can delegate *responsibilities to others*.
- Dedicate time to *shaping others into leaders*.
- Encourage the habit of *working as a team*.
- Stress the *good qualities of others* and avoid highlighting their flaws.
- Try to be *positive and optimistic*.



- *Discipline yourselves for success* and not for failure.
- Put *people first*.
- Develop the *habit of giving*.
- Do not allow a desire for *material possessions to control you*.
- Do not compare yourselves to others; *compare yourselves with you*.



- Dedicate time to *reading and discover in yourselves new talents.*
- Choose *JESUS as your role model for leadership. Imitate Him, be inspired by Him, learn from Him,* talk to Him and you will be able to serve as He would, live as He would, and be leaders like Him.



**Recapitulating
what we studied**



1- Four characteristics of traditional leadership

- Synonymous with power.
- Exalt self.
- Chase after material gains.
- God is not a part of their structure.



2- Four characteristics of spiritual leadership

- Their foundation is service.
- They promote respect for people.
- They are God-centered.
- The well-being of all is their united concern.



3- Five qualities of successful leaders

- They know what they want.
- They make an effort to reach their goal.
- They risk more trying to reach their goal.
- They make more mistakes trying to reach their goal.
- They go to God in order to achieve their goal.



4- Five words of advice for successful leaders

- Always seek excellence.
- Keep yourselves improving.
- Inspire others.
- Rebel against mediocrity.
- Choose Jesus as your role model for leadership.

