*Grace Leadership*

*(Session 1, Day 3)*

*The Character of a Leader*

**1. The Definition of Character**

1.1 *Character is the collective set of moral and ethical traits that make an individual distinct from others.*

1.2 *“According to Scripture, virtually everything that truly qualifies a person for leadership is directly related to character.” ~ John MacArthur*

Most, if not all, organizations today have a set of leadership requirements, or expectations, for their leaders. Commonly, the more valued traits have to do with performance and results rather than character; in fact character “flaws” are often overlooked if the results are beneficial to the organization.

This is not God’s way of leadership, in truth He often uses the weak and simple to accomplish His purposes. We have already looked at people such as Moses and Gideon and seen how reluctant they were to serve in leadership roles; and how God assured them that they would succeed because *He* would cause *His* plans to succeed through them.

*“It’s obvious from the phenomenal results of Spurgeon’s ministry that God used him in mighty ways. Of course, everything Spurgeon accomplished was made possible by God Himself and the power of the Holy Spirit. Take these divine resources out of the equation, and Spurgeon would have amounted to nothing. No amount of human effort can even begin to match divine enablement.” ~ Steven Miller, pg. 179*

So what is the key to receiving “divine enablement” for ministry? The leaders God seems to use most effectively are those most yielded to His own character; those whose character is most like His.

**2. The Need for Leadership (Acts 6)**

Up to this point in the book of Acts, the Church is flourishing and experiencing great blessings; it’s also the point at which the Church becomes most vulnerable to internal problems. Let’s consider this Biblical case study that reveals the need for Biblical leadership.

*2.1 The Problem (6:1)*

• What was the problem and how *might* it have impacted the life of the Church?

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*2.2 The Priority (6:2, 4)*

• What was the priority for the 12 (the apostles)? What *could* they have done to take care of the problem?

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*2.3 The Plan (6:3, 5-6)*

• Describe the *qualifications* given for this leadership role?

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*2.4 The Prize (6:7)*

• What is the evidence that this decision was pleasing to God?

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Some have described this group of servant-leaders as the first *deacons* in the Church; it might be best to view them as *proto-deacons* since the actual word is not used. However, their ministry is certainly in keeping with the role of deacon/deaconess leadership that we will see elaborated in Titus 1 and 2.

*Session 2*

**3. The Qualifications for Leadership (Titus 1, 2)**

Almost every imaginable job comes with a list of qualifications, skills, education, experience, and other abilities and the same is true of leadership in the Lord’s bride—the Church! Let’s consider what God sees as the truly important qualifications for leadership.

*3.1 The Servant-Leader Paradigm (Mark 10:43-44)*

There is an old marketing slogan for a credit card that hyped it’s value this way: *“Membership has its privileges!”* Our world views leadership the same way: it is full of perks, privileges, power, and prestige; but…none of these reflect Biblical leadership.

• Why do you think Jesus used these two very powerful words (servant/slave) to describe His mandate for leadership?

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• *Why do you think this type of leadership isn’t valued in most of our culture?*

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*3.2 The Qualifications (Titus 1, 2)*

The Biblical qualifications for leadership (elder/deacon/deaconess) are found here in Titus 1:5-9, Titus 2:1-5, and 1 Timothy 3:1-13 in a condensed form. The same qualifications are found throughout the Bible in various ways, but the apostle Paul puts them all together here. Although we often refer to these lists as applying to elders/deacons it is clear from a thorough study of the Bible that these are qualities every believer should aspire to; they aren’t for *“super spiritual”* people.

***3.2.1 Titus 1:5-9***

Paul makes it clear in verse 5 that there was a need for leadership in the newly formed churches on the isle of Crete. Some of the reasons for the leadership need in Crete are explained in verses 10-16 which describes the dangers of ungodly people (wolves in sheep’s clothing) who pose a real threat to the purity, doctrine, and unity of the Church. By contrast, the apostle provides the character traits of godly men who must serve in leadership to protect the flock from such people.

• What are the qualifications listed in these verses?

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• Aside from character traits, what skill must an elder possess?

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***3.2.2 Titus 2:1-5***

Following on the heels of the teaching on male leadership we find a discussion about female leadership. While God has established a distinction between male and female leadership related primarily to their *spheres* of influence, many of the principles for both are the same.

• What are the qualifications for women in leadership?

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• Aside from character traits, what skill must a female leader possess?

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*3.2 The Foundation Qualification: Love*

Love is the foundational qualifier for leadership for several reasons: 1) We have received love from Christ as our Head, 2) He teaches us that love is the greatest thing, and 3) He commands us to love one another. One expression of love for others is the time you are willing to invest in them. Howard Hendricks once wrote, *“If you’re too busy for people, you’re too busy!”*

***3.2.1 The Love we have received (1 Jn. 4:19)***

You can’t give what you don’t have; this is especially true of love. Our capacity to love others comes from the love we have received from God, through His Son.

• How can you develop greater love for those you serve?

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***3.2.2 The Danger of Lost Love (Revelation 2:1-7)***

The Church as a whole, and we as individuals, have the ability to “lose” our “first love”, Jesus Christ if we are not careful.

• What did Jesus commend the church at Ephesus for?

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• How was the Ephesian church supposed to regain this “first love”?

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***3.2.3 The Elements of Love (1 Corinthians 13)***

The elements of love are disclosed in this letter to a church, which was desperately in need of expressing love to one another in tangible ways. Immediately following his teaching on the importance of spiritual gifts, the apostle concludes with chapter 12 and verse 31, *“But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.”* That verse is not simply the conclusion to chapter 12, it is also the transition to chapter 13, sometimes called the “love chapter.” The more excellent way he wants the Corinthians to practice begins and ends with love.

• In his book, *Leading with Love*, Alexander Strauch writes this: *“At Ephesus, the Lord was looking for his people to be sacrificially caring for one another’s needs, opening their homes to one another, living like an extended family, joyously serving and enjoying life together in the church and home. But their love had withered away.”*

• How do you think we as Grace Bible Church could improve in light of this list?

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