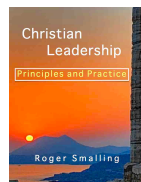


# CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP Teacher's Manual

by  
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Presbyterian Church In America

The textbook for this course is available for [KINDLE](#)



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### ***About the author***

Dr. Roger Smalling has been in ministry since 1964, when he went as a missionary to Europe with an independent mission organization. His leadership experience has included Field Leader for France, then later in South America as Team and Field Leader for Ecuador, as well as Assistant Regional Director for Latin America with that mission.

Later, while serving with the Presbyterian Church in America in Ecuador, he was instrumental in creating a successful leadership training system for the national Presbytery. This manual is part of that system.

Dr. Smalling is founder and director of [Visión R.E.A.L](#), an acronym in Spanish for Reformation In Latin America. This involves establishing and supervising leadership training centers along with writing and distributing their literature. The Smallings also travel throughout the region as conference and seminar speakers.

### ***The author's philosophy of leadership***

The Bible teaches *one* style of Christian leadership. Christ himself modeled and summarized it in Matthew 20. Principles of service and suffering form the basis of the leader's relationship with his subordinates. The leader also portrays equality and mutual respect toward his ministerial colleagues.

This author is Presbyterian in his theology of church government. He is anti-hierarchical regarding relationships between ministers. Scripture and experience reveal that Christian hierarchies among ministers often generate abuses resulting in the nullification of the spiritual authority of those ordained to the holy offices.

Christian leadership philosophy in the modern world is profoundly affected by corporate business management ideas. Many Christian leadership books are merely warmed-over American business culture expressed in religious language. Christians successful in business leadership in a secular setting may imagine that by writing books, they can take their success and bring it into the church and thus make God's Kingdom efficient...as though efficiency were a high value in the Kingdom of God.

Doing this may indeed augment the efficiency of the church, but at the price of the same abuses that exist in the business world. With their hierarchical mind-set, these writers fail to see the forest because of the trees.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, some modern managerial techniques are helpful. The author has included a few where they build relationships without being manipulative. People, not products, are the focus of God's Kingdom.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### [Syllabus](#)

[LESSON 1](#): The Christian Philosophy of Leadership

[LESSON 2](#): The Dangers of Hierarchies

[LESSON 3](#): Principle Activities of the Christian Leader

[LESSON 4](#): Vision and Planning

[LESSON 5](#): Goal Setting

[LESSON 6](#): Communication with Subordinates

[LESSON 7](#): Medium-Level Moral Issues

[LESSON 8](#): Serious Moral Problems

[LESSON 9](#): Problematic People

[LESSON 10](#): Dealing with Wolves

[LESSON 11](#): Conflict Resolution

[LESSON 12](#): Creative Thinking

[LESSON 13](#): Decision Making

[LESSON 14](#): Verbal Self Defense

[LESSON 15](#): Ministerial Ethics

[LESSON 16](#): Relationships Between Leaders

## **Syllabus**

This course was written originally in Spanish for the preparation of leadership candidates in the Quito, Ecuador Presbytery of the Presbyterian Reformed Churches of Ecuador. The idea is a self-reproducing system in which the teacher uses a manual he reproduces as he teaches and gives to his students. At the end of the course, the student not only knows the material, but has the tool necessary to teach it to others.

The course is therefore *not* auto-didactic. Nor is it principally academic in nature. A mature teacher must be prepared to play the role of mentor to his students, rather than a mere communicator of information.

The number of students in the class should be small, to allow for the interchange necessary in the mentoring process. Eight to twelve students is ideal.

### **Purpose**

- Establish in the mind of the student the biblical concept of servant leadership, by comparing it with the authoritarian hierarchies generally practiced in worldly contexts such as business, government and some religious institutions.
- Create in the student a strong sense of integrity with regard to leadership, help him identify unbiblical motives for desiring offices in the church, and replace those motives with the right ones.
- Identify and practice non-manipulative techniques for assisting his subordinates to grow in Christ.

### **Content**

The required textbook for the course is Smalling's **CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP**, available free on [Smalling's website](#), or through [Kindle](#) for a small fee.

The course also recommends Oswald Sanders' book **SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**. The teacher may require this text or not, according to his discretion. Sanders' book is excellent for the character-development aspect of the training, which is central to the course. It deals adequately with correct motivations as well as the biblical requirements for the spiritual life of a leader.

However, Sanders' book lacks specific and practical managerial information the student needs to begin practicing leadership. Therefore, the teacher

should not focus on the content of the book during class sessions. Sanders is homework reading only. The majority of classroom time should be used for discussion of concrete applications of leadership techniques. It may be a temptation for the teacher to depend too much on Sanders. He should avoid this.

The teacher must also be aware this course overlaps with two others: Ecclesiology, and Personal Revival. The nature of the material touches unavoidably on aspects of church government, especially when we get to issues such as discipline in the church or parity of elders. Likewise, when the course touches on decision-making, some of the material in Personal Revival becomes relevant, such as the part on divine guidance. The teacher should avoid diverting the class toward a lecture in ecclesiology or devotional life, although aspects can be mentioned briefly.

The course, therefore, should be as practical as possible, dealing with real-life situations and problems the leader will encounter in his ministry.

Social classes and cultures vary in the kinds of problems a leader encounters. The teacher will need to be flexible and sensitive to these variables. The lesson plans are therefore general guides and the teacher may use his own judgment as to format, without eliminating important content.

Finally, the teacher must keep in mind that this class is *training* in leadership, not a teaching *about* leadership. The student will have profited very little if he finishes the course with nothing more than an increased knowledge of leadership theory.

### ***Group Exercises***

Educators have found role-playing to be one of the most useful teaching devices known. The group exercises in this course use this technique as a key element in the training. If the exercise does not suit role-playing in the class, the teacher can change it to something relevant.

It is recommended the teacher give plenty of time to the group exercises, since these generate a friendly, fun atmosphere in the class.

### ***The manual***

The students are welcome to a copy of this manual when they complete the course. Nevertheless, the teacher may prefer to hand out the individual lessons of the manual as the course develops.

### ***The pre-class exams***

The pre-class exams were designed to get the students to arrive on time. In some cultures there is a perpetual problem with tardiness. If the students are already responsible about time, the teacher may consider dispensing with these brief exams. Not all lessons have a pre-class exam. The teacher is welcome to make up his own.

### ***Student notes***

These are optional. The teacher may give them out at the beginning of each class to help the student follow the outline of the lecture. In developing communities especially, the student may not be in the habit of taking notes. Handouts specified for taking notes can help the student follow the lectures. You will notice that some chapters lack the student notes sheet because the lesson may not be conducive to them.

### ***Homework***

At the end of each chapter of Sanders' book is a series of questions. If the book is accessible to each student, the teacher may assign some or all of these to be completed as homework in a separate notebook, and turned in at the end of the course for credit. This motivates the students to read that book carefully during the week.

### ***Class length***

Experience shows that about 90 minutes is ideal, with breaks.

### ***Lesson plans***

The number of lessons does not correspond to the number of classes because some lessons require more than one class. Sometimes, however, it may be possible to deal with two subjects in one class session.

## **LESSON 1: The Christian Philosophy of Leadership**

Materials: Textbook, **CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP** by Roger Smalling; Optional textbook, **SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP** by Oswald Sanders

### ***Introduction***

- Take attendance of students. Do this at the start of every lesson.
- Hand out the syllabus. Give the students a few minutes to read the syllabus and to ask questions about it.
- Explain to the students how to get a copy of the textbook, **CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP**, downloadable at [Smallings' web site](#) free of charge, PDF or Word format.
- Distribute copies of Sanders' book if the teacher wishes to use it.

Note: The entire basis for the philosophy of leadership of this course is taken from Mt.20:20-28. The teacher needs to be very familiar with this text, and prepared to use it to show the key elements of Christian leadership. He ought to be familiar also with harmful styles of leadership, especially those common in Christian circles.

### ***Lecture: INTEGRITY, The Central Virtue in Christian Leadership***

- Use here the illustration of the West Point Lieutenant that follows this lesson, ([see here](#)), to introduce the concept of integrity as central to the Christian leader. Explain this kind of personal discipline is what God is looking for.
- Memory verse: 2Cor.1:12 Explain that Paul is clarifying he has no hidden agendas. He will not indulge in politicking nor does he intend to manipulate anyone. Explain the principle of transparency is really a question of profound personal integrity. No hidden agendas.
- The key text of the course is Mt.20:20-28. Three points form the entire philosophy of the course. These express the integrity and humility of Christian leadership.
  - **Parity**: This means elders in the body of Christ are equal in authority, though not in function. Biblical government is an association of ministers, working together in mutual respect as equals. Complex hierarchies have no place in God's kingdom and are essentially worldly.



- **Service:** The leaders have a *servant* attitude rather than a *ruler* attitude.
- **Suffering:** The pressures of leadership are enormous. A leader must be prepared to suffer, often in secret, to fulfill his calling.

### **Parity**

This point gives the teacher opportunity to lecture from Matthew 20 against authoritarian leadership styles and hierarchies in church government. Jesus expresses in this text his absolute prohibition of such leadership styles among Christians.

The two disciples in the text thought the kingdom of God was a hierarchy like terrestrial kingdoms and wanted to assure a good ranking for themselves. Jesus rebukes the craving for positions of honor as opposed to serving. The desire to serve God effectively is a legitimate form of ambition. Pursuit of status and honor is not. Exhort the students on the dangers of the fine line between these two kinds of goals.

Jesus also rejects the carnal process of *politicking* to obtain honor, position or status. The two sons of Zebedee approached Jesus by way of their mother. They tried to use the influence of another person to gain advantages. This is carnal politicking.

The Father grants offices by his decree, not by human declarations or politicking.

Authoritarian hierarchies normally characterize the world's philosophy of leadership. Mention that in the next lesson you will discuss in greater detail the dangers of hierarchy in Christian organizations.

What did Jesus mean by the phrase, *it shall not be so among you*? He is prohibiting his disciples from appointing to leadership people with authoritarian temperaments like those in worldly hierarchies.

Jesus was speaking in Aramaic, a dialect of Hebrew. In that language, future tenses can be used as imperatives. Jesus was probably saying, "I categorically forbid you to put authoritarian people in office."

### **The right kind of confidence**

Great self-confidence characterizes leaders in the world. Confidence in God characterizes the leaders of God's people. The two disciples, James and John, showed the wrong kind of confidence when they said that they were

capable. Yet shortly after this, along with the other disciples, they abandoned Jesus and fled.

Explain to the students there is no job in the kingdom of God we are completely fit for. We would not have to rely on the Lord otherwise. God may give us jobs bigger than our natural abilities so we learn to rely on Him. This is why self-confidence in Christian leadership is so absurd. A strong confidence in God may *look* like self-confidence to others, but God knows the difference.

### Service

Exhortation: Christian leadership focuses more on helping others than commanding them. It is a life given to service. V.28

Be careful about motives. Leadership brings a certain status and honor. Many are attracted to Christian offices for such honor but wind up being negligent leaders and generally dictatorial. Their concern is more for their own status than the welfare of the people. They often do harm to themselves as well. *There is a time when a man lords it over others to his own hurt.* Eccl. 8:9

### Suffering

*"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered.* Matt. 20:22

These disciples were unaware that the call to Christian leadership is a call to suffering. The suffering involved often takes the form of psychological pressure and stress that others neither bear nor understand.

Frequently people have high expectations of the leader that he is unable to meet. They may be looking to a pastor, rather than to Christ, to meet their needs. When the pastor is unable to perform to their expectations, they may consider him incompetent.

Others might have an insubmissive attitude to authority and will only submit to the ministry of the leader when it is absolutely necessary.

Sometimes the leader must hold the line on godly principles that others may not understand or agree with.

Often the leaders are called to apply biblical discipline when it may be unpopular or misunderstood. The leader may simply have to suffer in silence.

God in His wisdom knows how to arrange circumstances so the titles and honors accompanying the office are insufficient compensation for the sufferings and stress. Those who value titles and honors more than serving the people of God, soon find disappointment.

## ***The Honorable Lieutenant***

This anecdote goes with Lesson One to illustrate integrity in leadership.

West Point, the United States Military Academy, is known for its strict code of honor. In response to any question, cadets may give only four answers: "Yes sir, No sir, I don't know sir, or No excuse sir." Making excuses is a crime. If a person under a cadet's responsibility makes a mistake, the cadet takes the blame. This is to teach them responsibility, honor and most importantly, integrity.

One of their cadets graduated and was sent to Vietnam as a lieutenant. His first assignment was to supervise the construction of a runway that was already underway in the jungle. A sergeant was in charge. Unfortunately, the lieutenant knew nothing about runways. He asked the sergeant, "Are you sure the direction of this runway is correct?" The sergeant assured him it was. So the lieutenant said, "Well, continue on therefore and I'll trust your judgment."

An hour and a half later, a colonel came by who was an expert in runways. He blared, "Who is the *idiot* who ordered the runway to be built in this direction?" The lieutenant almost replied, "This sergeant here said he knew...etc." But his actual words were, "I did, sir."

The colonel got up to the lieutenant's face and demanded, "Why did you order that?" The lieutenant replied, "No excuse, sir."

At this moment, the sergeant approached, with his hand upraised as though wanting to explain. The colonel apparently deduced what had happened and asked the lieutenant, "You just graduated from West Point, didn't you?" The lieutenant said, "Yes sir." The colonel glanced at the sergeant, then back at the lieutenant and concluded, "Well in that case, it was an honest mistake."

Later on the colonel invited that lieutenant to join his staff. This represented a substantial promotion. Why did the colonel do that? He knew that men of integrity are both rare and valuable.

Later on the Colonel invited that lieutenant to join his staff. This represented a substantial promotion.<sup>2</sup> Why did the Colonel do that? He knew that men of integrity are both rare and valuable.

Homework: Read the first three chapters of Sanders and answer the questions with a brief paragraph, to be turned in at the next class.

**Group Exercise**

## Attitudes of the Leader

Instructions: In your group, come to agreement about the questions below. Write a brief paragraph, no more than two or three sentences, agreed upon by the group.

Compare the following two people and come to conclusions about the differences in their leadership. Timothy, Phil.2:18-21; Diotrephes, 3Jn. 8-9

Why did Paul command the Corinthians to submit to the family of Stephen? What characteristics were notable in this family? 1Cor.16:15-16

Did Paul deserve to be an apostle? 1Tim.1:12-14; 1Cor. 15:9-10

**Student Notes**

The Christian Philosophy of Leadership

Mt.20:20-28

The key virtue in Christian leadership: \_\_\_\_\_

Three Fundamental Principles And Attitudes

Suffering

Parity

Service

Homework: Read the first three chapters of Sanders and answer the questions with a brief paragraph, to be turned in at the next class.

Pre-class Exam: Integrity in Leadership

Time: 10 minutes

Name \_\_\_\_\_

True or False Questions

Instructions: On the line next to the sentence, put T for true or F for false

1. \_\_\_\_\_ There is a difference between authority and authoritarianism.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ A call to leadership is a call to suffering.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ It is always wise for a person to exercise an office of leadership.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Christ forbade authoritarian leadership styles.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The fundamental motive in Christian leadership is service.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ According to Sanders, it is acceptable to desire a position of leadership if that person is genuinely motivated by the concept of service to others.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ According to Sanders, it is perfectly legitimate and normal that a Christian should seek church offices because of the honor and status involved.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ The word *ambition* in its worldly sense, means, *campaigning for promotion*.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The prophet Jeremiah said that it is good to seek greatness for oneself.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ There are a lack of good leaders.
11. The three basic principles of Christian leadership according to Mt. 20:20-28 are:
  12. \_\_\_\_\_
  13. \_\_\_\_\_
  14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Write out the key memory verse of this course with its reference.



Answers to the exam.

1=T//2=T//3=F//4=T//5=T//6=T//7=F//8=T//9=F//10=T

11= Parity, Service, Suffering in any order.

12= 2Cor.1:12 The version for the memory verse should be at the discretion of the teacher

## **LESSON 2: The Dangers of Hierachies**

In the last lesson, you taught on the Christian style of leadership. You explained there exists only *one* style of Christian leadership, the one Jesus taught and exemplified. You explained that temperament has nothing to do with it. There were a variety of temperaments among the disciples but all were called to leadership.

To reinforce the concept of *integrity* as central, you may use the illustration of the courageous pastor that is found at the end of this lesson.

### ***Definition***

A hierarchy is an organizational structure based on ascending ranks, like a ladder. The military is such a structure with generals, colonels, and sergeants, down to privates. Authority is entirely vertical with no accountability at the top. No number of privates could ever hold a general accountable for his actions. Blame is always shifted downward.

Large corporations are also structured hierarchically, with high-paid CEO's, vice presidents and department managers, down to the janitors. Again, authority is always from the top down with no accountability at the top. Lower ranks always take the blame for the errors of the management. Officers represent the hierarchy to subordinates, not the subordinates to the hierarchy. The highest value in a hierarchy is its own survival, not the service of people.

The opposite is Presbyterian government, which is more like a round table. Everyone has voice and vote. There are no ranks, just differences in functions. If there is blame, it is supposed to accrue to the group as a whole.

The difference between the two is comparable to a ladder versus a round table.

What problems do hierarchies generate in Christian government?

### ***Hierarchies stimulate the worst in fallen human nature***

At this point, have the students discuss with the teacher what aspects of our Adamic nature tend to be stimulated by hierarchies.

Present the answers:

### **Arrogance**

People have a tendency to want to feel superior to others. Hierarchies provide for this by giving ranks. The assumption is, "I have a superior rank because I am a superior person."

### **Unholy ambition and jealousy**

A person sees another in a rank above his own and says to himself, "he is no better than I. In fact, I may be better than he. So why shouldn't I have his rank?"

### **Dirty politicking**

If a person wants a superior rank, he may be tempted to try to pull strings and make deals to get it. This is morally doubtful, not to mention the waste of effort that could be spent in productive work.

### **Blame shifting**

This is a form of moral cowardice. Human nature has a tendency to blame a subordinate when something goes wrong. Imagine several men on a ladder carrying loads. If the man on the top drops his load, where does it go? On the man beneath, who in turn drops it down the ladder to those below. The guy on the bottom gets it all. The load in this case, is the blame. It is common in hierarchies for the leadership to pick a lower-level fall-guy for serious errors.

### **Man-pleasing**

Since a person's rank in the hierarchy depends on the good will of the rank above him, this tempts him focus on pleasing the man above rather than pleasing God.

### **Mediocrity and incompetence**

In his classic, **THE PETER PRINCIPLE**<sup>3</sup>, sociologist John Peters describes how each member of a hierarchy tends to rise to his level of incompetence. As a person performs well at one level, he may be promoted to the next one, until he attains a position he cannot handle. He will remain at this position generating problems for himself and others. With time, incompetence of this sort multiplies until the organization as a whole becomes mediocre.

Good leaders try to mitigate these negative effects. These efforts are laudable, though often futile. Human nature, including among Christians, is susceptible to the temptations generated by hierarchical systems. It is questionable if a hierarchy can successfully avoid generating these negatives.

Discuss among the students: Is it possible for a Christian organization to be structured hierarchically without generating any of these negatives?

### ***Humility of the Christian Leader***

A myth regarding spiritual leadership:

When God wants a leader, he looks down over a group and chooses the man with the most wisdom. He especially wants to see a special gift of wisdom and a profound spirituality. This is why God chooses some and not others.

Ridiculous! Leadership is by grace and no one deserves the title. We will never be entirely qualified. Otherwise leadership would not be a gift.

This author has known many Christian leaders, some of whom have expressed that God chose them for leadership because they possessed a special gift of wisdom. I have observed two points in common among such leaders.

First, all were quite young. Second, they ended up making fools of themselves. The maturity that comes with years, gives a man time to discover his weaknesses and learn the humility of accurate self-knowledge.

Should we refrain from choosing young leaders? That would be unscriptural. Nevertheless, the term *elder* in Scripture derived its meaning from the concept of maturity that normally comes with years. Though we ordain young men, nevertheless we expect them to possess the wisdom, maturity and humility of an elder, rather than a novice.

### ***The Committee Chairman***

At a meeting of my Presbytery, the moderator asked for a report from the Missions Committee. The secretary of that committee rose and explained he did not have the report because he was unaware it would be required at the meeting.

The moderator began to reproach the secretary for his negligence. Toward the back of the room, one of the pastors, stood and said, "Sir, I am the chairman of the Missions Committee. If there is any mistake, I am the one to blame and you may address any reproaches to me."

The moderator asked him if he knew about the error. He replied, "No sir, but that is beside the point. I am the person in charge, and if there is any reproach to be made, you may address it to me." The moderator dropped the point and continued with other business.

I thought, "It is no wonder this pastor has a thousand people in his church!" Like the proverbial lamp on a hill, such integrity cannot be hidden.

Homework: No reading in Sanders this week. Students are to concentrate on memorizing the text of the course 2Cor.1:12 and studying the basic principles explained so far. To help the students think, the teacher may encourage the students to write suggestions on how the effects of a hierarchy can be mitigated in a Christian organization.

## **LESSON 3: Principle Activities of the Christian Leader**

### ***His function***

Feed the flock. The spiritual welfare of his subordinates is his main concern.  
Acts 20:28

### ***His strategy***

Put the church to work. 2Tim. 2:2, Eph.4:11-12

According to Eph.4:11-12, it is the church as a whole that is to be doing the work of the ministry. Everyone in the church should have a job. The leaders job is to be a supervisor. That's what *bishop* means. The Greek word is *episkopos*, one who oversees work done. Illustrate here how absurd it would be for a construction site to consist of one guy doing all the work and everyone else sitting around applauding.

A primary trap for the fledgling leader is to focus on the weakest members rather than the strongest. The smart leader spends his best efforts with the winners, not the losers. The big danger for the novice leader is imagining his job is to heal all the wounded, sooth all the feelings and support the weak. This is like trying to feed all the poor. Impossible! There is no end of them.

Prepare your messages for those few who are listening and taking you seriously. Show the strong how to help the weak. Beware of the old educational trap of speaking to the lowest common denominator in order to *reach* all. This results in mediocre teaching with mediocre results.

### ***His product***

Other leaders.

*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 2Tim. 2:2*

A wise leader focuses on producing other leaders. This is the most important thing a Christian leader can do.

## ***Three kinds of leaders in the church***

### **Pioneers**

A pioneer has a vision for something new. He is the trail-blazer, taking risks to go where nobody has gone before. He has enthusiasm, drive and self-initiative. He is impervious to criticism and impatient with the petty minds around him. These make good pioneers, but lousy administrators.

### **Managers**

These follow in the footsteps of a pioneer, and carry forward the vision the pioneer has established. He puts order and administration into the vision, without being satisfied with the status quo. Though the vision is also his, he sees more clearly the means to accomplish the goals.

### **Spiritual janitors**

These manage to get appointed to ecclesiastic offices and simply maintain things as they are. These people tend to lack goals and vision. Their primary concern is to see that the congregation is *spiritual*, i.e., morally clean and with sound doctrine.

They spend a lot of time dealing with disciplinary case, discontent people or those with people with deep problems. Leadership development is not their priority. They perceive themselves as spiritual leaders, erroneously so, because of success in these activities. They will rarely approve any new or exercise activity in the church because those might rock the boat. They have no specific goals and their focus is more on keeping members happy so they won't leave the church.

If these people are allowed primary leadership in the church, then it is highly unlikely that the church will grow much.

Homework: Chapters 4-6 in Sanders, plus questions at end of those chapters.

**Group Exercise**

## Principle Activities of Christian Leaders

Have each group read the question and verse. The group shall agree on a brief answer.

1. Compare 2Cor.1:24 with 2Cor. 13:10. Explain what seems to be a contradiction in Paul's attitude regarding the use of his authority.
2. In 1Cor.2:1-4, Paul explains his style of preaching and teaching. How does Paul's style differ from the world?
3. In 2Cor:4-5 Paul expresses something that commends him to the ministry. What is it?



## **Student Notes**

### Principle Activities of the Christian Leader

Review: The three basic principles of Christian leadership in Mt. 20:20-28:

- A.
- B.
- C.

The great myth about Christian leadership.

1 Cor. 15:9-10; Gal. 1:12-16; 2Tim.2:2

Principle activities of the Christian leader:

His function

His strategy

His principle product

Pre-class Exam: Principle Activities of Christian Leaders

Multiple Choice: Each question has only one correct answer. Put an **X** in the space by the correct answer.

1. God chooses some for leadership and not others because:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ some are wiser or more spiritual.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ some are more eloquent.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ leadership is a gift of the grace of God.
  
2. The principle function of a leader according to Acts 20:28 is:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ leading people to Christ.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ shepherding the people of God.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ preaching well.
  
3. According to 2 Tim.2:2, the Christian leader should principally produce:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ effective programs for the church.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ sermons appropriate for the occasion.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ other leaders.
  
4. A good strategy for the Christian leader is to:
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_ focus his efforts largely on the weakest people so that the church as a whole will be stronger.
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_ focus his efforts largely on the strongest so that they in turn may help him with the ministry.
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ not focus on anyone in particular.

Answers

1. C
2. B
3. C
4. B

## **LESSON 4: Vision and Planning**

### ***What is Vision?***

You as the teacher must define the terms without preaching. Students will lose interest if you fail to move promptly into the practical aspects of planning. Define vision with some good examples and proceed to the practicalities of planning.

### ***Vision is an attainable dream***

It involves two aspects:

- A dream. This means a goal of great value, difficult to attain, requiring long-term investment of time and resources.
- A workable plan with intermediate goals.

### ***Examples***

The Latin American revolution under Simon Bolivar was the result of a vision. Bolivar had a dream for the liberation of an entire continent. It was costly and required a lifetime investment of resources, yet the outcome was worth it.

The Protestant reformation was the result of the vision of men like Luther, Calvin and Knox. It took a long time at the cost of many lives. The religious freedom we enjoy today is the result of that vision.

A vision need not be as ambitious as these examples. Every successful church or Christian organization was started by a person with the vision to see it happen.

### ***A person without a vision is not a leader***

He is, at best, a good worker. Yet having a vision does not in itself make one a leader. He needs two more elements: A workable plan and the personal drive to implement it.

### ***A vision without a plan is visionary.***

If all a person has is vision without a plan, he is merely a visionary and will accomplish little.

Eloquence alone is not vision. There exists intelligent and eloquent people who discourse in ambiguous terms about what needs to be done. They seem more adept at analyzing the deficiencies of others than creating a workable plan. They may appear knowledgeable and confident, but deciphering their

strategy is like catching smoke. One never quite grasps exactly what is their plan. Politicians are often like this. Such Christians are visionaries at best and leaders, not at all. They are to be ignored.

### ***Why a vision with a plan?***

- It keeps you on track.
- It helps you prioritize.
- It attracts the commitment and involvement of other people.

A leader attracts followers. But nobody will follow you if it is unclear where you are going. Your vision, plan and passion will draw people behind you like the wake of a ship drags the water behind it.

### ***Characteristics of a good vision and plan***

#### **Simplicity**

If you cannot explain the basic idea of the vision in a few seconds, it is too complex. People will not understand and support you. Your promotional literature should project the vision in the first line or two.

Slogans help. Try to come up with a simple one to help people grasp the idea.

#### **Difficult but not impossible**

If it were easy, somebody would have done it already. Either nobody believes it is possible, or no one has the zeal to accomplish it.

To accomplish a vision, it takes a person who can distinguish between *impossible* and *difficult*. The ability to take what others see as impossible and evolve a plan, is the difference between a Christian worker and a Christian leader.

### ***How to invent a plan***

#### **Get the facts.**

- Learn all you can about what is involved to implement your vision.
- Find out who else is attempting a similar thing. Determine what they are doing that's different from what you would like to do.
- If your vision is something that has been accomplished elsewhere, learn all you can about it.

•Find out what efforts have failed and why, to avoid duplicating mistakes.

### **List the resources needed**

Here is where the word *impossible* comes in. If the resources already existed to fulfill the vision, someone would have initiated it. Moral courage and a sense of call enter the picture right here. After listing the resources needed, you will have to start researching how to get them. If the vision and plan is from God, right here is where you will see God begin to work circumstantial miracles and open doors for you.

Example: Suppose you have the vision to establish a Christian college in a major city. First, you would research everything you can find about Christian colleges, how they are organized, financed and governed. You would then list the resources you need: Funding, property and professors.

Note: God rarely supplies all the resources at once. He usually has us start small and build from there. *Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much*, Luke 16:10.

### **Characteristics of a godly vision**

#### **It must advance the kingdom of God, not one's own self-esteem**

How does your vision advance the Kingdom of God and produce holy people? God's goal for His Kingdom is to create a holy people. What's accomplished must fit into this goal or the idea did not come from Him. Some have built their own empires as monuments to themselves in the name of God's Kingdom.

#### **It must be based on a personal call from God**

Just because it is a good idea does not necessarily mean it is God's call to do it. David had a great idea for building a temple to honor God. Nathan the prophet informed him that God was pleased with the idea, but it was Solomon who should actually do it.

You will know the vision is from God if you cannot get rid of it. It sticks to your soul like paint on a wall.

#### **It must be reproducible by the participants**

This is a basic ministry principle. When the apostles established churches, they trained key men to do the same.

### **It must feature a plan to become self-sustaining**

Part of the plan must be to make the ministry self-supporting. Otherwise, you will have created dependency. This hinders Christian maturity. Make yourself dispensable. If your vision requires your perpetual existence to make it work, then you are building your own monument rather than God's kingdom.

### **Create plans for obtaining resources**

Every successful Christian leader can tell how he started with next to nothing and how God supplied bit by bit. The Lord will rarely put everything into your hands at once. He always starts small. Look on each small resource as God's down payment on the vision.

**Student Notes**

Vision and Planning

What is Vision?

Why a vision with a plan?

Characteristics of a good vision and plan

How to invent a plan

Characteristics of a godly vision

## **LESSON 5: Goal Setting**

Briefly review the key points of the previous lesson. Use this lesson to help the student establish intermediate goals toward the vision.

### ***Goal Setting***

Once a leader has ascertained what they believe is God's will, they need to *define* it clearly for the people involved.<sup>4</sup> They must also see that everyone keeps on track with the stated vision. This is not easy.

### **Statement of goal**

Write in one brief paragraph what is the goal. It must be simple, without a lot of flourish.

### **Means to the end**

Add specific steps to indicate how you plan to reach the goal.

### **Check-points**

Answer the question, "We will know we are reaching our goal when..."

Review the goal with your subordinates regularly, asking for their input on how to attain it. This is a good way to help them *own* the goal. A good idea is to set fixed dates to review your *goal's progress*. If you have a goal for this year, for example, then set dates every two months to review your progress. In a church setting, this could be done in a meeting.

Problems inherent in having clear goals: There will always be dissenters, no matter what you do. Suppose your goal is to win five younger-aged couples to the Lord. Then one Sunday someone in the church approaches you and says, "A group of us would like to start a ministry to the elderly in the nursing home."

How do you react? You say, "That's a laudable goal, but how does it fit in with our vision this year of incorporating five young couples into the church? Show me how the idea fits in with the vision of the church and we can approve it. Otherwise, no."

In short, you are helping your members stay focused without getting sidetracked. You will probably receive criticism for this, such as, "The pastor has little compassion for the elderly."



Problems in the church always pop up that will tend to distract from the goal. Watch out for this. These will tend to rob your time. At the invasion of D-Day in World War II, everything that could go wrong, did go wrong. More casualties than anticipated. The generals gave the order to keep advancing regardless and the allies won, despite mistakes and casualties.

Homework: Sanders, Chapters 8-10. Answer the questions associated with the chapters.

### **Group Exercise**

#### Goal Setting

Divide the students into groups of three. Odd numbered small groups like this help identify people that have a tendency to want to be alone or do not like to interact with others. Have them write together a brief paragraph on a goal to be accomplished in the church, with at least two *means* towards that goal. Explain that this is an exercise only and that you are not requiring them to implement it in reality. This will help them to think creatively and interact with one another. Observe their interaction. Have each group sign their statement and give it to you for credits.

**Student Notes**

## Establishing Goals

Determining the will of God.

Spiritual Discernment versus human reasoning: A big danger.

Defining the Goal.

The means to the end.

Frequent check-points: Reviewing the goal.

Problems in establishing goals.

## **LESSON 6: Communication with Subordinates**

### ***General Principles***

Honest and clear communication is the only form the Bible recognizes in leadership. No flattery. Have the students read 1Thess.2:5 and discuss what is flattery.

### ***Regular feedback***

Never *assume* your subordinates understand clearly. This is a principle in teaching. Assume *nothing*. The second most common error in spiritual leadership is the lack of adequate communication with subordinates. The immediate result is a discrepancy between what the leader *thinks* the subordinate ought to do, versus what the subordinate actually ends up doing. Frequently the subordinate imagines he is doing an excellent job, only to be reproached by the leader afterwards. Invariably the subordinate feels he has been treated unjustly.

### ***Show confidence in them***

Communicate confidence in your subordinates by permitting them to do the work without meticulous supervision. Don't choke creativity by giving them the impression you are watching each move they make. Cut them some slack by assuming their competence, until proven otherwise.

Nevertheless, you will have to oversee the final product. Tell them up front you are going to *check* from time to time to see if they need anything. Look for something to praise, not to criticize.

### ***Common communication mistakes***

A certain leader never gave feedback to his team members. Result: No team member knew when he was disapproved or not. His subordinates began to ignore him completely and did exactly what they pleased. The lack of feedback was therefore reciprocal. They did not bother to inform the leader of anything going on. When the time came for the leader to give evaluations of his teammates, he had to do it based on second hand rumors, because he had lost contact with reality. This occasioned him a series of rebukes from his subordinates.

Another leader makes appointments with his subordinates only when he is displeased. This creates an atmosphere in which his subordinates

resent his presence and avoid him. They show him respect outwardly, but in private they neither esteem his person nor his counsel.

One leader tended to make unilateral decisions without consulting the other ministers in his team. This caused that his teammates to feel that their opinions and viewpoints lacked value, which resulted in complaints to mission headquarters. The mission, dedicated to a form of hierarchy, responded by removing the leader from his position. They did this in the manner typical of hierarchies.... they gave him a promotion!

### ***Positive Affirmation: The practice of praising your subordinates***

#### **Why praise?**

- People are encouraged to live up to your expectations.
- It creates a general positive atmosphere and makes you a more approachable person.

If you give a job to a person in the church and they do well, take a minute and thank them. Don't use general terms. Be specific. Describe specifically what it was they did well and why you like it. Show how you *feel* about their work. This makes a leader approachable. Let them know you appreciate their work and value them.

People often judge a doctor's competence more for his bedside manners than his medical skill. This may be irrational, but it is a reality.

Likewise, people will evaluate your leadership more by how you treat them personally than on the quality of your sermons, the accuracy of your decisions or your administrative ability in the church.

How to praise others, from **THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER** <sup>5</sup>

"Tell people that you are going to tell them how they are doing."

"Praise people immediately."

"Tell people what they did right... be specific."

"Tell people how good you feel about what they did right, and how it helps the organization and the other people who work there."

"Stop for a moment of silence to let them feel how good you feel."

"Encourage them to do more of the same."

"Shake hands or touch people in a way that makes it clear that you support their success in the organization."

"Give them affirmation before other people, whether they are present or not. It will get back to them, and though they may say nothing, they will really appreciate you. Speak good of them before others."

Certainly this can be applied in a church context as well. Everyone needs encouragement, including those not doing well.

Paul begins his letter to the Corinthians with legitimate praise for the things that he found good about them. 1Cor.1:4-10.

Homework for this week: Praise five people in the manner specified above.

### ***Negative Affirmation: Minor corrections***

Suggestions from **THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER**<sup>6</sup> with some personal elaborations.

- Correct immediately. Do not let a series of incidents accumulate and then explode. Do not reprimand people for things they did weeks or months ago.
- Tell people what they did wrong. Be specific.
- Tell them how you *feel* about what they did wrong.
- Stop for a few seconds of uncomfortable silence. This allows them *feel* how you feel.
- Hold them accountable. Make a verbal contract with them if appropriate; such as, "Will you agree that I can help you with this?" By rights as a spiritual leader, this should assumed, but in fact it may help psychologically to articulate it.
- Shake hands, or touch them in a way that lets them know you are honestly on their side. Don't let them perceive you as an enemy. You aren't out to *get* them. Their problem is something you and they are going to work on together.
- Let them hear that you highly value them. Remind them you appreciate them as people, but are concerned about their level of performance in this situation.
- When the reprimand is over, it is over. Don't harp on it. Treat it as an anomaly, until it is repeated. Note Paul's exhortation to *walk worthy* of their calling.<sup>7</sup> This implies their errant conduct is beneath their dignity.

Note Paul's manner of correction of the abuse of the Lord's Supper, as an example of correction. 1Cor.11:2 - He starts by praising them for a good thing, and elaborating on it. Later, he says *Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!*, specifying exactly what they were doing wrong, giving examples. Then he follows it up with instructions on how to do it right.

### ***Negative Affirmation: Matters of a more serious moral nature***

Serious moral issues like insubordination, gossip, deceit, lying, laziness, or sexual sin. These generally do not respond to anything but sharp rebuke. The Apostle Paul points out two such examples:

- Divisive people: Tit.3:10- Have no patience with them. No more than two rebukes. Then remove him.
- Heretics: Rom.16:17-18

### ***On Repentance***

How to tell when a person, including yourself, is not truly repentant.

#### **Shifting blame to...**

- The other person. "He did such and such and so I reacted. Or, "I repent but the reason I sinned is because you provoked me."
- Circumstances. The only provocation God recognizes is our own sinful heart.
- Another tendency is to indirectly blame God. "I'm only human. God made me and so if I sin I am not responsible."

#### **Calling sin by another name:**

- Wrong choice. "The fault is really a lack of understanding on my part rather than a sinful heart."
- Immaturity. "The fault is a lack of growth, not my sinful heart." This actually blames *time* for sin rather than oneself.
- Misfortune. "I fell into it." This excuse claims sin was like a hole in the ground that he did not see. Since he did not put it there, he is not responsible for falling into it. He was drawn to the hole because something is there his sinful heart likes.
- A Trial. The Bible never calls sinful conduct a trial.

#### **Self-pity**

Acting like a mere victim of sin rather than a sinner.



- Trivializing

- "The sin I committed is an isolated act not typical of what is in my heart."
- Claiming the consequences are benign and therefore the sin is not important. "My sin of gossip is not murder...therefore it is trivial." All sin is serious, although not all acts are equally sinful.

- Generalized confession. Asking forgiveness in vague terms for wrongdoing or sin in a broad sense like, "I'm sorry I offended you." rather than "I am sorry that I committed the sin of \_\_\_\_\_ against you."

What to do when a Christian apologizes in vague terms for offending you. Two questions to help both parties see the need of repentance.

- "Exactly what sin did you commit that caused you to request my forgiveness?"
- "Exactly what sin did I commit that provoked you to do that?"

Books I recommend on this subject:

Thomas Watson. **THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE**

Dan Allende. **INTIMATE ALLIES**

Homework: Sanders Ch.11-14

### **Group Exercise**

#### Practicing Positive Affirmation

Put students into pairs. Each student will practice these exercises with their partner, reversing roles in turn. Use the four steps below. Students should critique each other's performance.

1. Explain what the person did well, being specific.
2. Explain how this makes you feel and how it helps the church or situation.
3. Encourage the person to continue in the same good work.
4. Shake his hand or touch the person to communicate sincerity, where culturally appropriate.

#### Practice One: Freddy and the chairs.

A new believer in the church, Freddy, has asked to help serve the Lord in a tangible way. You recommend that next Sunday, Freddy could arrange the chairs for service. When you arrive at the church on that Sunday, you notice that Freddy has done an excellent job. Congratulate Freddy, applying the steps taught in the lesson.

#### Practice Two: The elder candidate and his first sermon.

One of your elder candidates has taken a course in Homiletics preaching. It seems he may have a talent for this, although he does not do an outstanding job because of a lack of practice. Next Sunday, he preaches a sermon, more or less well. Encourage him, applying the steps taught in the lesson.

## **Student Notes**

### Communication with Subordinates

#### General principles

- A. Honest and clear communication.
- B. Constant positive feedback
- C. Communicate your confidence in your subordinates.
- D. Positive oversight

#### Positive Affirmation: Practice of praising your subordinates.

- A.
- B.
- C.

#### The effects of positive affirmation.

#### How to praise a subordinate

#### Negative affirmation: Minor corrections

Explain three of the most important points involved in correcting subordinates in minor matters.

### **Group Exercise**

#### Correcting Subordinates

Group the students into pairs. Each student will practice these exercises with the other, changing roles in turn. Students should critique each other's performance. Use the steps below:

- Explain what the person did wrong. Be specific.
- Explain how this made you feel. Tell them how this conduct can damage the church.
- Explain how you would like to help him progress in this area of his life.
- Make a verbal contract. Both of you are going to work on the problem together.
- Mention you appreciate him as a person and his action is not worthy of the kind of person he is.
- Give him your hand or a culturally relevant physical affirmation.
- Important: Once the correction is over, do not repeat it.

#### Practice One: Henry and the white lie

You noticed that brother Henry, one of the members of the church, practices the *white lie*. You wait for an opportunity to correct him. One Sunday he doesn't come to church. The following Sunday you mentioned you missed him at church. He tells you that he traveled to another city to visit his sick grandmother. But through other means you knew in advance that he had gone to a ball game. Corrects Henry, using the steps taught in the Lesson.

Practice Two: Mrs. Jones and the sin of gossip

A certain lady in the church, Mrs. Jones, is a new convert. Her favorite pastime seems to be gossip. It is habitual and has already caused problems in the church. Correct Mrs. Jones, using the steps in this Lesson.

Pre-class Exam: Minor Corrections

True or False

1. \_\_\_\_\_ It is important to repeat several times to the person the nature of his offence so he will remember the correction.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Never touch the person you are correcting, neither before nor afterwards, in order to maintain a certain psychological distance.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ We should put off correcting someone as long as possible to accumulate more examples and evidence of their errors and why you are correcting him.

According to Sanders:

4. \_\_\_\_\_ A life of prayer is important for the leader, but not absolutely essential.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ A leader should read nothing else but the Bible.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ It is important that the leader read a book only once so as to avoid wasting his time on one theme.

## **LESSON 7: Medium-Level Moral Issues**

Review the basic points on how to correct. Use the same type of exercises as in the previous class. The teacher may play the role of the person to be corrected, giving each student an opportunity to practice. The students may then give an analysis of each example. Most of the class time may be taken up with this exercise. This skill is important enough to warrant the use of the time.

### ***Corrections involving more serious moral issues***

Persons with serious moral defects: Rebels, habitual gossips, habitual liars, lazy, spiritual pride. These, in general, do not respond except to strong reproaches. Tit.1:12-13. However, strong rebukes need not be with a loud voice nor with an authoritarian attitude. The first session may be along the lines of counseling; the second time with stern rebuke.

#### **Gossip**

This sin is especially dangerous to the unity of the church. Leaders must be especially alert to the potential damage. They must not hesitate to apply immediate correction.

#### **Spiritual pride**

This sin usually produces rebellion and a spirit of division if not dealt with quickly. The devil knows how to take advantage of this sin. It also opens the person to spiritual deception. The way to deal with this sin is to tell the person he is manifesting a spiritual pride far beyond his level of growth. One can try to get the person to study the holiness of God and His commandments, but it is unlikely that individual will do that. Spiritual pride is accompanied with false humility. Like other forms of rebellion, it is difficult to treat.

#### **Divisive people**

Those who cause divisions, such as heretics and rebels, will be addressed in the next Lesson.

### ***Counseling procedure: The Three Hammers***

These "hammers" represent progressively firmer rebukes.

- Rubber hammer= Firm but with some gentleness.
- Wooden hammer= Stern rebuke.
- Steel hammer= Stern, with discipline measures applied.

Clarify with the person that you have the moral obligation to deal with the matter. You do not need permission because this is inherent in your office of leadership.

Make a verbal contract with the person in order to make him accountable to you for his progress. This may include a series of counseling sessions, a progress report periodically or a promise to notify you of relapses of the problem.

### **General observations and suggestions**

The *mental effect* of serious sin: It has been noted that people in deep sin are normally incapable of reasoning soberly about their spiritual condition. Sin perverts the mental ability to reason about moral issues. In theology, this is called, *the noetic effect*, from the Greek word *NOOS, mind*. You as counselor must be prepared to confront this inability in the person. This can be frustrating.

### **To counter the noetic effect**

- Be direct and clear, repeating yourself.
  
- Require feedback from the person to assure he is tracking along with you.
  
- Be conscious of typical techniques for evading responsibility. See the lesson on Repentance.

Homework. Read Sanders Chap.11-14 and answer the questions corresponding with those Lessons.



**Student Notes**

Dealing with medium-level moral problems

Types of moral problems

Dealing with the problems

The three hammers

Establishing your authority

The verbal contract

Observations and techniques

Homework. Read Sanders Chap.11-14 and answer the questions corresponding with those lessons.

## **LESSON 8: Serious Moral Problems**

### ***Signs of a lack of repentance***

#### **Sorrow for consequences, not for the offense**

In many cases especially of adulterers, the persons involved complain that they were not treated *with love*. Or, within Presbyterian government, the person will complain that "you did not follow proper procedure."

They will go to other people for counseling. They do this to get the kind of counseling they want to hear. This is a form of self-justification.

Clarify that if they do this, you will consider it a form of rebellion. This will add to their sin that already exists. Make it clear that God put them under the jurisdiction of the church and it is to the church that they will submit. Otherwise they may be disciplined for contumacy.

Try to make the person understand that he is not in a condition to judge his own spiritual condition because of the debilitating effect of sin. For this reason, the steps in restoration will be decided by the church leadership, not by himself. The mental effect of sin deceives a person into thinking that he is capable of treating himself.

#### **Seeking counsel from members**

If the person tries to go to another member of the church for counsel, he needs to understand that it is the leadership of the church, not the members who are responsible for counseling him. In some cases, it may be necessary to talk to family members or friends who are members of the church to clarify this point. Cases have occurred in which members or family have contradicted the counsel of the church leadership, thus creating further confusion.

There is a technique that sometimes works to prevent a person seeking counsel outside the church. Warn him that a letter may be sent to any counselor explaining that according the regulations of the church, seeking counsel outside of church authority is an act of contumacy on the part of the counselee and thus hinders his restoration.

### ***Suggestions***

In the bylaws of the church, there should exist clauses explaining that if a member of the church under discipline, or under investigation for possible discipline, leaves the church to join another church, then a letter will be sent

to the leadership of that church explaining that he has left the church to escape discipline.

In the bylaws, a clause should exist prohibiting members to seek counsel outside the leadership of the church if they are under discipline, under investigation for discipline or begging counseled for a serious moral problem that could result in discipline.

A typical tactic of the devil is to try to make the leaders feel that they are incompetent. In nearly every disciplinary case that this author has observed, this sort of attack comes from some source or other. Family members will sometimes come to the defense of a member under discipline. The leaders can explain all they want that it is counter-productive to defend the person because the leaders are not the enemy. The leaders *ought* to do this, although experience shows it rarely does any good.

### ***The leader's dilemma in disciplinary cases***

Counseling situations contain elements that the leadership cannot share outside the boundaries of the counseling session. When it comes time to apply restrictions or discipline, the news will get out to the church members quickly, but without all the facts. The result is inevitable. Some in the congregation will disagree with the discipline applied because they do not have all the facts, though they may think they do. This makes the leaders look like culprits in the eyes of some people. In a large church, it is rare to apply discipline without losing a member, even if the offending party remains. What to do about this?

The bad news: There is nothing you can do about it. You may try explaining that there are aspects of the problem that the leadership cannot share. Some dissenting members will have the good sense to just trust your judgment. Others will not. This is part of the cross that leadership must bear.

The good news: In every situation in the experience of this author in which the leadership has held their ground on godly discipline, and suffered loss as a result, God blesses the church above and beyond any losses. For every member who leaves offended at the leaders for applying godly discipline and counsel, God sends others because He knows He can entrust His sheep to good hands.

Homework: Read Sanders Chap.15-18 and answer the questions corresponding to these Lessons.

**Student Notes**

## Dealing with Serious Moral Problems

Things the leaders should not permit those under treatment for serious moral problems to do or say.

"You didn't treat me with love." or, "You did not follow the right procedure."  
Go elsewhere for counseling.

Question your competence

Question if the discipline is appropriate.

General Suggestions: Providing beforehand for problems that may arise as a result of dealing with disciplinary situations.

Homework: Read Sanders Chap.15-18 and answer the questions corresponding to these lessons.

## **LESSON 9: Problematic People**

I highly recommend **ANTAGONISTS IN THE CHURCH** by Kenneth C. Haugk. This book is a must for the library of any church leader. Many of the ideas in this lesson are amplified and illustrated in Haugk's book. Several of the observations on problematic people are influenced by it.

### ***Definition of problematic people***

Problematic people are those who, motivated by a desire for control, cause division and confusion through constant complaining, criticism and resistance to authority. <sup>8</sup>

### ***Their basic motivation***

Control. Behind the complaints of problematic people, the desire for control and power reigns. Never give it to them. This is the worst possible thing you could ever do.

### ***Characteristics of problematic types***

Most of these characteristics are typical, though not all will apply to a given individual.

- Incredibly tenacious
- Extreme self-esteem
- Aggressive
- Tendency toward anger
- Rigid attitudes
- Very manipulative and charming
- Independent attitudes
- Frequently very intelligent

### ***First clues of when a problematic person is about to attack***

- Begins to express "concerns," which are really complaints about the condition of the church, especially the leadership. Goes around seeking support for his concerns.
- Meddles in church affairs that are none of his business.

### ***Common errors in dealing with them***

- Being as patient with them as with others who err on a less dangerous level. This is the most serious mistake in dealing with them. Titus 3:10.
- Trying to reason with them.
- Trying to please or placate them.

- Giving them any authority or recognition.
- Taking a lot of time listening to their complaints.

### **General Principles**

#### **Do not warn him more than twice. Titus 3:10**

This is the most common error in dealing with this sort of person. These people represent more danger to the church than any other type of problem. They are capable of tearing a church apart in short order. The sympathy and patience a leader may show toward members with other types of sin, is inappropriate here. Paul's commands in Ti.3:10 are not suggestions.

Paul commands that such a person be given *no more than two warnings*. Then get rid of him. You cannot afford to play games with this sort of person. compassionless. We must keep at the forefront our compassion for the flock as a whole. But make sure first that he is a divisive antagonistic.

Clarify that they will never be allowed any control in the church. Normally, when it becomes clear to them that they will never have the control they secretly crave, they will usually leave on their own accord.

Problematic people will waste your time. In the mind of the problematic, you are a fool, incapable of understanding he is completely right. Thus, he will take up as much time as he can, to persuade you how wrong you are.

Forbid them to discuss their so-called *concerns* with others in the church. Make it clear that if they do so, you may view it as contumacy. If they cannot agree with the decisions of the leadership, then it would be better to look for another church. Make it clear that you will not tolerate decisions of the leadership to be challenged by his appeal to the congregation. If they attempt to do, you will consider that an act of rebellion meriting discipline.

Clarify that if they persist in their divisive attitudes, they will be disciplined.

#### **First step: Meeting with the problematic**

Have one or two elders with you.

Choose the place and the time. Do not let the offending party choose it.<sup>9</sup> The meeting should be brief. It should not be around a meal or in a family atmosphere. State the amount of time you can give to them.

Permit them to start the conversation. Speak as little as possible and give them no information of *any* sort. They will likely take anything you say,

however innocuous, and twist it to make you look foolish. They will quote from you, out of context, to show how wrong you are.

Limit the sessions to 20 minutes and stick to it. Make him see that you are a man of your word.

Take notes. Do not permit them to see the notes. Report the facts to the other leaders.

Do not allow their accusations to put you on the defensive. Maintain a professional attitude.

Do not argue with him. You will not change his mind and will only provoke him more.

End with the warning that the church leadership will not tolerate persistence with his concerns since it may tend toward dissension in the church.

### **Second Step: A meeting with a warning**

This ought to be done by church leaders.

In this meeting the leaders will establish clear limits on the activities of the problematic person, with the warning that if he crosses the boundaries, it will be necessary to excommunicate him for the sake of the unity of the church. Since this is the second warning, make it clear that there will be no further warnings.

Teach your congregation how to work together to prevent problematic people from causing trouble.

Teach in your new members class that all churches have internal problems from time to time and that one of these is the inevitable discontent of some people in the congregation. Point out the key marks of a habitually problematic person and teach them how to resist their influence.

### **Key marks of a habitually problematic person**

- Habitual complaining or gossip against the leadership.
- Complaining about petty things.
- Campaigning behind the scenes to gather support for their petty complaints.





**Student Notes**

Dealing with Problematic People

Definition of a problematic person

Motivations of a problematic person

Characteristics of the problematic personality

First clues that a problematic person is preparing to attack

Common errors in dealing with problematic people

General principles

First Step: The interview with the problematic person

Second Step: Meeting with and warning the problematic person

Teaching your people to help in dealing with problematic people

## **LESSON 10: Dealing with Wolves**

Acts 20:28-31

One of the key functions of the New Testament Elder is to watch out for those that may destroy the flock. Such persons who may come in to provoke divisions and/or steal sheep are termed *wolves*. Paul had to fight wolves constantly and we do too. He had his legalists. Today we have false Christians and cults.

### ***Two kinds of wolves***

#### **Exterior**

*For I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Acts 20:29*

Paul spoke about wolves as being a certainty. Notice they usually wait until the leader is absent to enter. They realize the leader is likely to have discernment to spot them. The phrase "enter in" shows that they are from outside the congregation. These are usually false cults and can be dealt with by warning the people in advance about what are those cults: Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, etc. These wolves are usually recognizable by name and are therefore not as dangerous as the other kind. Simple instruction to the congregation about which groups to watch out for is usually sufficient.

#### **Interior**

*Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:30*

These are the most dangerous kind, because they are already in the church, and therefore the most difficult to deal with.

They have pride and ambition in their hearts.<sup>10</sup> They are dissatisfied for some reason and the devil begins to use them to draw away a following after them, rather than after Christ.

Both external and internal wolves are usually self-deceived and therefore do not see themselves as wolves. 2Tim.3:13

### ***Why does God allow wolves to come into the church?***

*No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 1Cor. 11:19*

At no time will you learn more about the people under your charge than when wolves come in. Their loyalty, stability, and maturity will be put to the test. People you thought you could build on, may be a disappointment. Others that you thought were weak will prove to be stronger than you thought.

### How to recognize wolves

- They always operate behind the backs of the leaders. Jn. 10:1-2
- They will often visit individuals in their homes without the knowledge of the church leaders.
- They will try to obtain authority or position in the church without going through the leaders. Jesus taught that they come disguised as sheep. Mt. 7:15-17
- A simple key to detect them is when they begin to steal sheep: Sheep don't steal sheep. Wolves do.
- They are critical of the leaders, often behind their backs. 2Jn.9-10
- Everyone has weaknesses in his ministry. This does not grant people the right to criticize. At times, a wolf may make accurate criticisms. This does not justify undermining the ministry of a person, especially to weaker members of the church. Note what wolves said about Paul in 2Cor. 10:10.
- They boast of their own spirituality. 2Cor. 10:12. However, Paul sarcastically mocks the spiritual pride of these wolves. They are often comparing themselves with others and the comparisons always seem to turn out in their favor. They frequently claim to have more insight on some things than the leaders and may imply that they have more to teach than the leader. 2Thess. 3:6
- They tend to provoke division. They invariably seek out weaker believers. Wolves seem to have an internal radar by which they detect weak believers. It may be a satanic form of discernment. They will invariably go straight for the weak believer and try to impress them. Ro. 16:18

### ***How to deal with wolves***

*Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. Titus 3:10*

#### **Rebuking and rejecting**

With nearly any other kind of problem you normally demonstrate patience, compassion and mercy, but not so with wolves. You must show no patience, compassion, or mercy.

Paul's instructions are clear: a wolf does not deserve more than two rebukes before throwing them out. Be very firm with them. Example: A person from a sect comes into your church. He sits quietly and makes no disturbance but after the meeting sidles over to some weak believers. You discover he is getting addresses. You take him aside and warn him. He returns another time and does the same. Again you warn him and make it clear that one more offense and you will have to close the door to him. Again he ignores you.

You then tell him to leave and not come back. A warning from the pulpit to the people may be necessary.

#### **Running interference**

The whole church, especially the mature believers should be trained in how to run interference when a wolf enters.

This means simply intercepting the wolf before he or she has an opportunity to get to the weaker ones after the meeting. They may engage them in conversation so that they will not have opportunity to do damage. All mature believers in the church should understand that they can be called upon to do such interception if necessary.

**Student Notes**

Dealing with Wolves

Two kinds of wolves

Exterior

Interior

How to recognize wolves

How to deal with wolves

## **LESSON 11: Conflict Resolution**

The material below will be to assist the leader to play the role of mediator in a conflict between two other people. We will assume the conflict is relatively minor issues such as how to proceed in a work project.

How do you know when a conflict is brewing between two people in the church when you have not been formally notified?

### ***Clues***

- Cliques form: It seems that certain people are making a point of avoiding each other.
- Absence: People begin to attend irregularly.
- Silence: Some people stop communicating and isolate themselves when they feel in conflict.
- Work teams don't produce as expected.
- Sarcasm: This symptom is an overflow of a heart full of malice. It should be dealt with as malice, not as innocuous comments.

### ***Determine if you should intervene as mediator. You intervene...***

- When one of the parties asks you to mediate in the conflict. Though your office as leader gives you the right to be involved whenever you think it necessary, it is more effective to obtain permission. It is better to approach them as a servant offering to help, rather than as an authority figure bringing order.
- When the working atmosphere of a group is affected or hindered by conflict. You have no other option but to intervene.
- When you are respected by *both* parties. If you lack the respect of either, it would be better to ask another leader to mediate.

### ***Initial procedures***

First, clarify to the disputants how the conflict is affecting production. This helps change the focus from feelings to the facts of the case. People are generally more interested in their own feelings than any other factor. As

soon as they see how their conflict is affecting outcome, you will have earned the right to intervene. Let them know that this conflict is not acceptable and needs to be resolved.

Next, establish a meeting to resolve the conflict, expressing that "this is a problem that we three are going to resolve together so we can work together more effectively." Clarify that you are not a judge. You are there to help get matters back on track and that you are not interested in mutual accusations.

### **The actual meeting**

Establish rules of procedure. Make it clear that you are in charge of the meeting. The rules you establish depend on the situation. You will set rules like, "When one person speaks, the other will not interrupt."

Make it clear that each person should present his view objectively, without attacking the other person. Have them be specific, not general. Try to get them to present their views as though they were a third party observer. The idea is to keep emotion out of it as much as possible.

Seek to come to an agreement on the nature of the problem to be resolved. Stop and pray asking for guidance.

Ask each person to generate possible solutions. If the situation is emotionally charged you can ask that the parties *write* their solutions on the spot instead of expressing them verbally. Compare them with your own. Afterwards you can express those solutions they have in common. This forms the basis for the solution.

Ask each person to commit to resolving the problem.

Summarize the plan. Set a follow-up meeting to insure that the conflict has been resolved and each is keeping his commitment.

### ***Diplomacy techniques for conflict resolution***

You as mediator may find the following techniques useful during a mediation process.

**TRIPLE OPTION PLAY:** Instead of a simple choice between doing or not doing a thing, give to the person several options and allow them to choose the one they think is best. Example: Do not say, "Would you like to help on repair work at the church this Saturday?" This requires a yes or no answer. It's

easy for the person to simply say no. Instead, put it this way: "In which of these three areas do you feel most comfortable helping this Saturday?...painting, washing windows or repairing chairs?"

CUTTING THE CAKE: Example: Two children are fighting over a pile of candies, some of which are more desirable than others. Each child, of course, wants the best ones. The solution is to have one of the children divide the candies into two piles. Then the other child will choose the pile she wants. Thus, the first child is motivated to divide the piles as equally as possible to avoid losing. This strategy is useful for adults when dividing responsibilities, privileges, or other things.

HOLIER THAN THOU: Joe and Bill could not come to agreement regarding responsibilities in the church. Ask them to write down what each thinks is the most equitable plan. Let them know that you will submit these to a neutral party for evaluation, to decide which plan is best. It is remarkable how this procedure brings agreement. Frequently the plans turn out nearly identical. The reason is because it focuses them on task rather than their rights.

SUBSTITUTION: Due to a mix-up, both John or Bill were scheduled to do the announcements next Sunday. One of them will be put aside. How do you handle this diplomatically? Tell one of them you have a job for him that is more important than the announcements such as taking up the offering.

TOSSING A COIN: The idea of casting lots to determine who gets which share of the inheritance is found in the Bible. Ps.16:6

TEMPORARY MEASURES: "Let's try this for a month and see how it works."

GIVE ME A HAND: Instead of assigning a job, ask the person to *help* you. Do not say, "I want you to arrange the seats next Sunday." The person may be thinking, "I don't care what he wants." It is better to say, "Can you help me with a problem? I will not be able to arrange the seats next week and I need someone I can rely on to do it. Will you be able to do this for me?"

A tip: Sometimes people hide their real motives for complaining. A person may argue a point when all they want is a little appreciation. Sometimes you can find a way to meet this need in a way that is different from what they are asking.

Homework: Sanders 15-18. Answer corresponding questions.



**Student Notes**

## Conflict Resolution

Clues that there exists a conflict among the members.

How to determine if you are the right person to resolve the conflict.

First steps

Procedures during the meeting.

General diplomacy and negotiation techniques

Triple Option Play

Cut the Cake

Holier Than Thou

Substitution

Flip a Coin

Temporary Measures

Give Me a Hand

## **LESSON 12: Creative Thinking**

Start with an illustration about someone who used creative thinking in a project. My favorite is the following:

During a missions conference in a church, the Sunday School teachers wanted a way to get the five and six year olds, to understand what is a missionary and what the conference was emphasizing. One of the teachers brought a shower curtain from home that had a map of the world printed on it. She also brought a can of shaving cream.

She spread the shower curtain on the floor of the Sunday School room, then asked the children what a missionary does. To illustrate, she had the children spray shaving cream on the United States, where they live. They put a heap of shaving cream there. They were told to spray quite a bit on Great Britain and some other countries.

The teacher explained that the cream represented the message about Jesus. Where is the most shaving cream? That shows us where most of the people have already heard the Gospel. Then she asked the kids why there was no cream on some other countries. Those are the places where there is no teaching about Jesus yet. Somebody must take the good news there.

The kids could pretend to be the missionaries. One by one, they removed their shoes and dipped a foot into the pile of shaving cream on the U.S., and walked over to a country where there with no Gospel to spread it there. The following day, these children were able to explain to the church in a simple way what is a missionary.

Remind the students of the difference between leaders and spiritual janitors that we discussed in a Lesson 3.

Define here what is creative thinking: The ability to invent original ideas for accomplishing your goals.

Why are some leaders only able to maintain the status quo? Part of the reason is a lack of creative thinking. Creativity stems from our imagination. God gave us our imaginations. He expects us to use it. When God guides us, He does so through our mental faculties, like the teacher with the genius shower curtain illustration.

### **The dot**

Use this illustration of how the natural faculty of imagination gets repressed as we grow:

A high-school teacher put a small black dot on the white board. Then he asked the class what it was. The students all agreed it was nothing but a dot. The teacher replied, "I did this same exercise yesterday with a group of preschoolers. They thought of many things it could be: a star, the eye of a bird, an insect egg, or the top of a bald man's head seen from an airplane!"

What is the difference between these groups? In the 12 years difference in ages, the high school students were losing their imagination. Why? Because they were learning the "right answers"; and learning what "can and can't be done."<sup>11</sup> The natural faculty of imagination gets repressed as we grow.

Learning facts is not the same as learning how to use your mind. Imagination is not something to stymie in Christians, but something that needs to be sanctified, and stimulated, like all other faculties of our mind. We sometimes have a wrong concept about the mind. We wait for God to give revelation, while God might well be waiting for us to work the faculties that He gave us. Result: Status quo

### ***Barriers to creative thinking***

Ask the students what they think are the barriers. They will probably come up with some of the things mentioned in this lesson. You can then help them with the aspects that they don't think of.

Fear of failure or ridicule: "If this new idea fails, we'll look like fools and the people will lose confidence in us."

Negative thinking: Realizing all the reasons why a thing can't be done, and talking yourself out of it. The key difference between a leader and a manager, is that the former ignores all the reasons why it can't be done. There is a natural tendency in the mind to look at a new and seemingly impractical idea, and state why it can't be done. All great entrepreneurs think the opposite. That is the difference. They do not ask, "Is this going to work?", but "How can we make it work?"

Comfort Zone: We establish limits in our minds of the sort of things that we are comfortable doing, and limit what we are really willing to do. Sometimes

it is good to get beyond our comfort zone, and do something new that we don't feel gifted in.

Laziness: "I'm not creative." Creativity is thinking, and thinking is hard work. It is easier to settle for that which is familiar.

### **Brainstorming**

Explain the concept of brain-storming: Coming up with all sorts of ideas until we hit on one that is really valuable.

Example: In a business meeting in a paint company, the technicians were discussing the problem of removing paint. One man humorously suggested that they could mix dynamite into the paint so that years later they could just set a match to it and it would blow off the wall.

This crazy idea was re-worked by the group until they came up with a practical solution: Mix a special chemical with the paint that later if another substance were applied over that paint job, the chemical would react to dissolve the paint. From this the idea, paint remover was invented.

### **Group Exercise**

#### Creative Thinking

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Assign them to invent a new idea for evangelism and write it down. The idea must be as silly and strange as possible. The only limitation is that the idea must not be harmful to anyone. This exercise is to help them break the limitations of their imagination and be creative. They will have 15 minutes to do this exercise.

Have a representative from each group read their idea out loud. Then trade their outline with the group nearest them. Each group will rework the crazy idea to make it feasible.

This exercise should help them see it is okay to come up with weird ideas, because they can be modified to work.

If time permits, have them do a similar exercise, about a unique way to present a sermon. An example: We once were in a service where the pastor preached for ten minutes on the subject of caring for one another. Then he had the church divide into small groups to pray for one another's concerns for ten minutes. Then he continued his sermon. This happened three times. It was a unique approach in sermon application.

**Student Notes**  
Creative Thinking

What Is a Creative Thinker?

Illustrations of Creative Thinking

Barriers to Creative Thinking

## **LESSON 13: Decision Making**

This lesson is based on the previous one, Creative Thinking. Your goal is to help the students understand the process of inductive reasoning in decision making. Getting creative ideas is not the same as putting them into action.

### ***The inductive reasoning process***

To avoid confusing some who lack higher education, don't elaborate on the difference between inductive and deductive logic. Use instead something like, "The logic of the detective."

Inductive reasoning: A detective uses induction to arrive at conclusions. "Give me the facts, nothing but the facts." He doesn't go about to prove anyone guilty or innocent. Likewise, as leaders are called on to make decisions, they must be careful to gather all relevant information. Some of the sources of information may be subjective, such as what God seems to be indicating in their personal quiet time.

Deductive reasoning: Deduction starts with an assumption about what is valid, then looks for the evidence to confirm it. This is legitimate in some contexts. We may assume it is God's will to evangelize a certain area and look for evidence from the Lord to confirm it, such as open opportunities.

### ***Sources of spiritual evidence***

Decision making in Christian leadership is primarily a spiritual process, rather than intellectual. Often the evidence gathered for making the decision is a mixture of spiritual and material.

In a church situation, God will normally have already spoken to one or more of the other leaders about the situation. Comparing notes of what God seems to be saying through their quiet times will often help indicate His will. Leaders should consider such evidence to be valid, and take it seriously. This form of evidence is in no way inferior to the concrete "facts" of the case.

Avoid mere human reasoning in making decisions. Do not permit your board or session meetings to degenerate into a business meeting. We serve God principally in our *spirit*.

*For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son. Rom. 1:9*

- The Quiet Time: As a leader, it is imperative for you to listen to God in your devotional life and note what He is indicating to you out of the Word.
- Prayer and fasting for seeking God: The Bible clearly teaches this as a practice among church leaders when it comes to making important decisions. It is something to take seriously. Acts 13:1-2; 14:23

### ***The incubation period***

God created us with a subconscious. This is the subliminal part of our brain that functions by itself with its own type of logic of which we are not usually conscious. If we encounter a complex and serious problem, we can put our subconscious to work by a process we can call *incubation*. We simply put in our minds all the relevant data and then forget it for the moment. Frequently the answer will come to mind a few days later.

Scientists use this process for inspiration in their research. The Greek mathematician, Archimedes, found the answer to a difficult math problem while taking a bath. He had given up temporarily on the problem and during the relaxation of the bath, the answer was suddenly clear. "Eureka!" he shouted, "I have found it!" His subconscious had been working on the problem while in the tub.



**Student Notes**

## Decision Making

Types of reasoning in making decisions.

Inductive

Deductive

Sources of spiritual evidence

The "incubation" of ideas

## **LESSON 14: Verbal Self-Defense**

Circumstances may occur when it is legitimate for the leader to defend himself. Sanders reminds the minister to pay no attention to criticism unless it comes from the united voice of your ministerial colleagues.

### ***When is self-defense legitimate?***

Self-defense is appropriate when the truths you preach are attacked.

Note the pattern of the entire book of Galatians. Paul defended the gospel he preached as the only true one. Notice his comment in 1:1-2, "...all the brethren who are with me." and 2:7-9, in which he presents his gospel to the Apostles for validation. If this is not a Presbytery exam, I don't know what else it could be. His appeal is to the body of ordained elders who have approved his ministry.

### ***You defend yourself when the validity of your call is put in doubt***

Paul considers the critics of his ministry as inadequate judges. He simply said so.

*So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. 1Cor. 4:1*

If there are laymen who question the legitimacy of your ministry, tell them the church board or your fellow ministers are better qualified to determine that. There exist within the church, or *ought* to exist, responsible courts such as a board or Presbytery for determining if your ministry meets biblical standards. If people in the congregation have complaints, they can present those in writing, with evidence, to the appropriate body. But we see also Paul's warning that those who lodge complaints may subject themselves to discipline as slanderers of the brethren.

What if the criticism is correct? Sanders suggests you say, "Pray for me."

### ***Basic verbal self-defense principles*** <sup>12</sup>

The following techniques are intended to use with the habitual complainer and critic. For sake of illustration, we will assume the criticism is unwarranted. The following techniques are not meant as a recommended approach against ordinary people.

Never reply to the attack on your character. Divert it to the *issue*. The intent of the attack is always to get you to defend your person. Don't fall into the trap. Remember: You have no moral obligation to defend your ministry to the congregation as a whole. According to Paul, the leader is never obliged to prove his innocence. The burden of proof is always on the accuser.<sup>13</sup>

Return the attack back to the other person by asking questions that divert the theme from your person to something else.

### **Verbal self-defense techniques**

#### **Time Travel technique**

##### Correctly applied:

Critic: "Why do you always preach on condemnation?"

You: "When did you first begin to imagine that I preach excessively on condemnation?"

##### Wrongly applied:

Critic: "¿Why do you always preach about condemnation?"

You: "I *don't* always preach on condemnation! I preached on grace last Sunday. I don't think that my emphasis on condemnation is excessive."

Note how this defense returns the accusation onto the other person. It focuses first on a past event in the mind of the critic, (*when* did you first imagine...) rather than his attack on you. It also questions their perception. This insinuates that the problem is *really* within the critic rather than in your preaching.<sup>14</sup>

The attacker thinks his accusation is true. To refute the presupposition only embroils you in a fruitless debate whether or not it is true you preach excessively on that subject. The critic wants you on the defense. What he expects is for you to defend your person and conduct. Don't go there.

Another example for the same technique follows. This procedure is identical to the one above. Only the form of expression changes.

Correctly applied:

Critic: "Doesn't it matter to you that...?"

You: "Since when did you first begin to imagine that it does not matter to me."

or..

Critic: "Doesn't the condition of the Sunday School matter to you?"

You: "When did you first begin to imagine that the Sunday School does not matter to us?"

Roger Smaling  
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Note: This defense, like the other, focuses not only on an event in the past (*when* did you first...) but insinuates that the problem is in the imagination of the critic.

### Shock effect defense

This defense that should be used with caution, and relegated only to people who are relentless critics. To the question, "Doesn't it matter to you...", simply reply, "No, it doesn't." Then walk away.

Correctly applied:

Critic: "Doesn't it matter to you what the people think of the your preaching?"

You: "No. Why should it matter it to me?" Then walk away.

This is the last thing the critic expects. It is disarming.

### Computer technique

This technique involves acting emotionally detached. Computers are impersonal because they have no emotions.

You act as though you did not realize that your person is under attack. Instead, you speak as though the critic were referring to some abstract concept in which you are not personally involved.

Any criticism involves two parts: An attack on the person, plus a situation.

Do not respond defensively to the attack on your person. Speak to the situation as though it were an objective and impersonal question having nothing to do with you.

Correctly applied:

Critic: "Since we have the new church board, the church has not grown."

You: "Church growth is an interesting study and can include logistics, demographics and other complex questions. Have you read a book on church growth lately?"

This turns the tables on the person. First, it deviates his comments as an abstract problem, not a personal attack on you. Second, you reveal his ignorance by showing he has not studied the subject. This implies he is simply out of ignorance.<sup>15</sup>

Wrongly applied

Critic: "Since we have the new church board which you organized, the church has not grown."

You: "Are you saying the board is incompetent or that I put it together wrong? I think the board is doing a good job...etc."

The attack insinuates you were wrong in the way you organized the church board and that both you and the board are incompetent. You will have fallen into the trap to address either point. The person will claim they never actually said you and the board are incompetent, and you are accusing them falsely. This is a half-truth. They never actually *said* those things, but implied them. It embroils you in a dispute over whether or not they have attacked you and the board personally.

If you allow this, they have already won. Their strategy was to accuse you and the board before others without standing accountable for it. Thus it doesn't really matter to them if you win the argument over what they *really* meant. He may even "apologize" for giving that impression. That's fine with him because the impression has already been given and that is his goal.

This kind of attack is always in a public setting because you are not really the audience he is addressing. If the person has said this to you in private, you may want to sit down with them and discuss their feelings. Notice I said, *their feelings*.<sup>16</sup>



## **Student Notes**

### Verbal Self-Defense

When is it legitimate to defend oneself?

Basic principles of verbal self-defense.

### Basic Techniques

#### Time Travel

- Correct application
- Incorrect application

#### Variation 2

#### Computer technique

- Correct Application
- Incorrect Application

## **LESSON 15: Ministerial Ethics**

The ordained office has certain rights and privileges. No one may disregard these rights without due process. If we understand these rights, we can more easily avoid treating our fellow ministers unethically.

### ***The right to respect***

*The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 1Tim. 5:17*

The preaching and teaching of the Word is so central to Christian ministry that we must honor those engaged in it.

This includes avoiding derogatory comments about a fellow minister that questions his competence. The exception is when speaking against heretics. Such are not fellow ministers, and we are mandated to denounce and warn against error. Rom.16:17-18

This does not apply to disciplinary cases.

Evaluating a fellow minister for consideration of future work is not speaking derogatorily of him.

We treat fellow ministers as equals, for that is what they are before God. In Reformed ecclesiology, there is no rank higher than the ordained minister in this dispensation. Some ministers have earned more respect than others because of experience or accomplishment. But in no circumstance are we to treat any minister as less than a minister of Christ.

### ***The right to one's own domain of ministry***

*...to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment. 2Cor. 10:16*

*And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, Rom. 15:20*



Even the Apostle Paul recognized the concept of *territory* in ministry. Every minister has his *sphere* of accomplishment that we respect. If a minister is working in a certain domain, we avoid infringing there. We avoid building our church next door to another legitimate evangelical work. By the term *another man's foundation*, Paul recognized others have ownership of the ministries they found.

### ***The right of authority over our own flock***

*Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Acts 20:28*

The Holy Spirit gives a particular flock to each minister to shepherd. From this we conclude certain ethical principles:

We do not steal sheep from another minister's flock. Some consider themselves and their denominations so superior that they feel justified in taking people from other legitimate evangelical groups. This is a religious form of thievery.

The mere fact that the sheep of other ministers are Christians gives us no right to minister to them without permission from their "shepherd."

### ***Freedom from accusations without due process***

*Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. 1Tim. 5:19*

### **The right to be judged by one's own peers**

No congregation has the right to receive accusations against a minister. Timothy, not the congregation, had the authority to receive accusations against the elders. Even then, substantial eyewitness evidence is necessary.

### **The burden of proof is on the accusers**

The accused ministers have nothing to prove. All burden of proof is on the accusers. If they fail to prove their accusation, then they are slanderers and must be rebuked before all.

***The right of voice and vote in all matters concerning his ministry***

We see in several instances how even the apostles did not impose their authority over ordained elders to oblige them to accept their decisions. The apostles recognized the right of others to be consulted in matters affecting them.

At the Jerusalem council, all the elders present had voice and vote, even though they were not all apostles. Acts 15

Paul says to Philemon,

*But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.*

Paul *urged* Apollos, but did not order him.

*Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; 1Cor. 16:12*

Christian hierarchies sometimes disregard these rights in their treatment of ministers within their ranks. If you are an officer in a Christian hierarchy, be aware of this tendency and take measures to avoid it.

## **LESSON 16: Relationships Between Leaders**

### ***The personal contract among leaders***

Two or more leaders can make a contract among themselves to always defend each other when one of them is verbally attacked. This includes the agreement never to talk negatively about one another to others. This presents a solid and united front to critics.

How does this work when a leader makes a mistake that others notice? If his error is a public nature, tell any critics that the other leaders are aware of it and will deal with the matter. Defending the honor of the ministerial office may involve defending the leader outwardly until the matter can be addressed in private.

God frequently defends the leader even when he is wrong in a decision. This is to defend God's own honor in His appointments. Beware of your pride at this point. Some leaders imagine that they are always right because things seem to work out despite confusion. This is self-deception.

### ***Review before final exam***

#### **Your general demeanor before others**

*We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. 2Cor. 6:3*

- Manner of speech: Talk with confidence, but without an arrogant or imposing attitude.
- Manner of dress: Clean but not ostentatious.
- Manner of Repentance: Never shifting blame, nor minimizing your mistake nor explaining it away.

Review the basic elements of Lesson One, using Mt.20:20-28.

#### **The importance of integrity**

You earn a reputation as a man of integrity by:

- Keeping your word once it is given.
- Being frank, simple and clear in your communication style.

- Repenting when you make mistakes, hiding nothing nor blaming others.

Remember: This kind of reputation cannot be earned from one day to the next. It is earned over time.

Review the principles of the illustration of the Honorable Lieutenant from Lesson 1.

Review the three principles of Mt.20:20-28.

- Parity
- Service
- Suffering

Give time for the students to ask questions about the course, or about real problems in their ministry and personal experience.

Remember to distribute the *course evaluation* sheets to the students, if the institution hosting this course requires them.

Remember to check students' homework in Sanders. You can do this during the final exam.

<sup>1</sup> Businessmen have said to me, "If I ran my business like you run your church, I would be broke within a year." To this I reply, "If I ran my church the way you run your business, I would end up with about as much sanctification in the church as there is in your business."

<sup>2</sup> This anecdote is taken from the audio book, **THE WEST POINT WAY OF LEADERSHIP** by Larry Donnithorne that may be found at your library.

<sup>3</sup> This entertaining little book is must reading for anyone trying to understand how hierarchies become so incompetent.

<sup>4</sup> It is assumed that the leaders have taken Roger Smalling's **PERSONAL REVIVAL** course and understand the principles of Divine guidance. By now, they should be operating on the basis of spiritual wisdom rather than mere human reasoning based on circumstances. Find this at [www.smallings.com](http://www.smallings.com)

<sup>5</sup> Blanchard, Kenneth. **THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER**. Spencer-Morrow, 1981, PP.44

<sup>6</sup> PP.59

<sup>7</sup> Eph.4:1

<sup>8</sup> From the book **ANTAGONISTS IN THE CHURCH** by Kenneth Haughk. Augsburg Publishing, Minn., Min, 1988. Much of this lesson contains ideas found in this book, which is a must read for any church leader.

<sup>9</sup> Haughk even suggests that if the time and place they propose is convenient, you should nevertheless change it to send the message that you are the one in control.

<sup>10</sup> James 3:14-16

<sup>11</sup> Illustration taken from **A WHACK ON THE SIDE OF THE HEAD: HOW YOU CAN BE MORE CREATIVE** by Roger von Oech

<sup>12</sup> Credit to Suzette Elgin in her masterful book **THE GENTLE ART OF VERBAL SELF-DEFENSE** for several of the ideas in this Lesson.

<sup>13</sup> 1Tim.5:19-20

<sup>14</sup> Again, we are assuming accusation is false, along with the lack of authority of the critic to make such accusations.

<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, if he can speak knowledgeably about the subject, maybe you better listen to him. Remember: We are assuming here that the attacker is just an annoying critic.

<sup>16</sup> We are still assuming here that we are dealing with an habitual critic rather than an ordinary layman concerned about the state of the church.