Strand: LEADERSHIP	Subject: **Ten Enduring Lessons About Authentic Christian Leadership**	Lesson: FIVE

Ten Enduring Lessons About Authentic Christian Leadership

Introduction

1. The Leader's Life

The effective Biblical Christian leader is an authentic and consistent follower of Christ, having an obvious relationship with (and dependence on) God

- spiritual focus – not materialistically driven, but listening to the Holy Spirit & totally reliant on Him
- has the right attitudes:
- motivation to experience/please God, be a worshipper
- desire to reflect the character and person of Christ, with the Holy Spirit's help/transformation
- followership – not "top down", but modelling submission to the Lordship of Christ
- servanthood – not emphasizing "rights" ▢ empathy – able and willing to "walk in the shoes" of others
- appreciation of the nature of power & authority, but proven to be trustworthy with the reins collegiality (a team player)
- genuine humility before God and others
- strong self-discipline in all areas of personal life
- commitment to hard work ▢ boldness (even if not natural temperament), but not brashness; linked to confidence in God
- a learner
- hungry to grow spiritually, intellectually, relationally (with all kinds of others)
- continually adding knowledge, skills and wisdom (formally and informally)
- open to learn from other leaders and followers (including gifted people who do not necessarily become functional "leaders")
- aware there is no end point in the learning journey.

2. The Leader's Integrity

Christian leaders worth following demonstrate high standards of personal integrity

- transparent and accountable
- submitted to God and others; willing to be corrected
- pursues integrity in the home (moral uprightness, cover for family, mutual submission to spouse)
- has integrity in finances and treatment of assets
- maintains honesty in relationship dealings
- preserves confidences

- chooses friends very carefully
- public and private personae match
- aware of own humanity
- aware of range of moral threats that de-rail leaders, and has strong safeguards in place
- prepared to de-brief regularly with trusted colleagues
- reliable, dependable ▫ consistent in words and actions; "walks the talk"
- credible – the "individual" is "real" and can be trusted (in a world of fakes and cover-ups)
- is alert to potential blind spots
- holds to high ethical principles in spite of erosion of these in the post-modern culture

3. The Leader's Call

The genuine Christian leader sees ministry as a call, to "service", a developed life, not a vocation/position/job/personal possession

- understands that the call of God is by divine appointment, not based own personality, family line, human achievement or agendas, not a "reward" or a "right", but comes from God and ultimately belongs to Him
- recognizes and secure in own call – prepared to be patient and trust God about release if other (including older) leaders do not yet see/acknowledge it
- does not rush ahead of God's timing
- knows the nature of the call, so that this can be given effect to, rather than loss of productivity and results that come from trying to fulfil all roles and meet the diverse expectations of many
- streamlines and regulates activities in line with the call, with a cooperative spirit
- is passionate about God, and aligns circumstances to the call, not the other way around
- does not focus on hierarchy or titles as ends in and of themselves
- recognises the nature, use and results of spiritual authority (to build up, 2 Corinthians 13:10)
- is alert to the potential abuse of spiritual authority
- promotes/celebrates the call of God in the lives of others – honestly (even if they have call/capacity to exceed the leader's own experiences/outcomes)

4. The Leader's Focus

Focus is essential if the leader is to know which way to go

- clear vision
- integral part of a larger "whole"
- able to articulate it clearly and confidently, in submission to God
- does not "flip flop" in goal setting and direction
- aware of context - builds with eternal values in mind
- perspective – keeps the past in mind, but looks ahead (endeavours to see around corners)
- has drive and enthusiasm to see the vision come to pass
- eye on the goal/destination
- has a "road map", but is flexible as to timing and means of delivery where necessary
- sets pace in line with people's capacities/expandability, skills and growth stages, but is not restricted in thinking by these
- open to innovation and agile in thinking

- strong commitment; a divine call, eternal cause, aiming for results that are measurable and durable (legacy)   MAD goals = Measurable Achievable Desirable
- focus does not come from church governance structures ("Wag the dog"), but can nevertheless be understood (and signed onto) by members
- tracks performance, progress and quality of results

5. The Leader & "Excellence"

Having done well, the genuine Christian leader seeks to excel

- understands that there is always a need to "go to the next level", to avoid complacency or mediocrity (or both)
- desires excellence as part of the organizational structure/culture
- underlying agenda is to glorify God (ultimate audience of One), and acknowledge that what happens for good is due to Him (2 Corinthians 4:7)
- understands excellence is often related to victorious outcomes – not half-hearted, sloppy, or shoddy
- counter-balanced with the reality that the best preparation, attitudes and planning are often influenced as to outcomes by dependencies, input/output of others and the limitations of being human ("jars of clay", 2 Corinthians 4:7)
- ensures achievable standards are developed, written down, understood, embraced and taught and performance against them is expected (starting with self)
- pursues excellence in all fields, e.g. work quality, record keeping & public life
- seeks to use excellence/credibility (personal influence and recognition of leadership) to expand impact on the lives of others
- able and willing to keep an eye on everything, to ensure people with responsibilities do not go off the tracks ▫ patient with co-workers who are still learning standards/expectations/processes

6. The Leader as a Team Player

Effective Christian leadership functions through team relationship

- establishes the overall tenor/mood of the team
- builds up/contributes to the team, with complementary gifts (chooses people with very different skillsets, experience)
- sets out expectations of self and others very clearly
- helps all team members to see how what they do "fits" into the work of the whole
- breaks down the size of the job; identifies all of the component parts; allows people to get on with their tasking and does not try to do everyone's work
- recognises when to hand over responsibilities to team members
- encourages mutual trust, encouragement, care and support as characterizing the team's interrelationships
- inclusive, not dismissive, not "threatened" by the strengths of others
- walks in step with team at all levels, even if "ahead" in some areas (or "behind" in others)
- identifies and raises up other leaders, multiplies leaders, mentors, models, provides practical instructions, plans for succession, releases people in their areas of ministry and competence
- casts/carries vision, as appropriate, but open to input, suggestions, correction, advice, counsel
- seeks to impart "energy" to other team members
- not authoritarian, domineering (even if the prevailing social culture is structured this way)
- recognises the role (positional "mantle") of leadership but does not use it to force compliance unreasonably

- willing to delegate to, and work with, trusted others, and not micro-manage them/their performance
- prepared to go "above and beyond" what is expected of the team (within functional logic)
- able to assess the character of other team leaders
- has a strong commitment to communicate and keep team morale high
- aware of where "the buck stops" (responsibility) and does not evade the bottom line
- trusted by the team because all members know they are "covered' and will not be "hung out to dry" if things go wrong or opposition/problems emerge
- genuinely interested in the welfare of team members
- committed to team "solidarity"; does not allow inter-personal issues to undermine unity (but does not shy away from addressing these issues)
- keeps the team together if some individuals leave (as they will, for a range of reasons, many of which will be valid)
- remains even-handed; does not get drawn into cliques or the agendas of others
- recognizes limits within which team members operate (eg age, time, cultural, learning capacities)
- pursues ethical relationships with all team members
- builds up every individual to succeed
- recognizes and celebrates the successes of team members; does not use these for personal gain
- knows that, when the group is functioning, and followers are personifying the vision of the leader, it is time to celebrate "Team"

7. The Leader & Other People

Good leaders genuinely like people (they don't "use" them)

- values people (for their own sake, not simply as contributors to the execution of the vision)
- cares for individuals as people, not machines, tools, stepping stones, sources of work, support, wealth or influence
- recognises the diversity of people and willing/able to work with such diversity
- willingly and openly grateful for others and their efforts; expressively appreciative – not taking individuals for granted or "assuming" or trading on their support, availability, cooperation ¤
- prepared to counsel and correct others as appropriate, but with patience and love, to affirm them, not to prove points, rights or authority, but to help them grow
- plans and puts strategies in place to draw out the willing best in people
- helps others to overcome fear of failure (or deal with it, as the need arises)
- committed to the principle and praxis of "positive leadership", to impart confidence, optimism resilience, stickability, and "never-give-up-ness"
- committed to "the one" (person) as well as "the remaining ninety-nine"
- prepared to learn how to relate cross-culturally
- generous
- prepared to forgive, not hold grudges or emphasize disappointment
- builds up others, rather than nagging them or dwelling on criticism about their failings

8. The Leader's Followers

Leaders have followers – by definition – and must look after them

- people usually enjoy working with trustworthy, godly leaders

- people stake a lot on those they follow, because there are usually life consequences
- followers need to be able to understand, articulate and be committed to, the leadership's vision
- followers need to be able to trust, believe in and reflect, the leadership's values and message
- followers look for leaders who will recognize their skills, strengths and passions and will seek to develop their capabilities and release them (while not cutting them loose)
- followers have a WIIFM ("What's in it for me?") approach – good leaders take this reality into account, as appropriate to the overall vision, the nature of the work and the life/ performance of followers
- followers are attracted to leaders who will look after them, reassure them in difficult times and uphold/restore them when things go wrong
- in a dynamic world people look for skilled change agents who will "pilot" them safely through transition
- communication, engagement and encouragement are essential in any relationship
- followers will fall away or find new leaders if they cannot keep up
- good leaders keep followers in their thinking and planning and work hard on relationships

9. The Leader's Testing

Good leaders are made by trials and tests that cleanse and shape them

- willing to surrender, be developed, tested, aware there is always a "price to pay" for service
- willing to be "under the spotlight" ▫
- growing understanding of (and honesty about) his or her own humanity
- aware of why leaders may "burn out", why seemingly good ministries are sometimes shipwrecked
- faith that God will try/develop His servants; He is not out to destroy or overwhelm them, but make them "fit for purpose" according to their calling (cf Psalm 105:19)
- prepared to grow into roles through testing/proving, and use weaknesses as strengths (in God)
- willing to have boundaries, or to be stretched and go to more responsible or demanding dimensions
- prepared to learn from pressures, mistakes, disappointing situations, and experience renewal
- aims to develop resilience, to be strengthened and grow – while ultimately depending on God for breakthroughs
- has developed confidence (in God) to lead in hard times, as well as good
- does not permit circumstances to foment cynicism (even when things seem to go wrong for reasons outside the leader's control), but keeps heart open to God's dealings and lessons
- does not play the "blame game" when mistakes are made or tough times come
- prepared to demonstrate sacrifice to fulfil the vision
- confident that, "Since (Jesus Christ) himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested." (Hebrews 2:18)

10. The Leader's Situation Sensing

Christian leaders of influence know what is "going on"

- understands and exercises good emotional intelligence
- has a well-developed and proven capacity to "make decisions"

- not "in a hurry" to put others into leadership roles
- aware of where everyone is "up to" – so there are "no surprises"
- prepared to listen to the smallest issues, but sensitive to longer-term impacts
- has well-developed environmental knowledge and sensitivity
- sees leadership in a life context
- develops new leaders who demonstrate faithfulness
- prepared to put aspirations on hold till the right time
- sense of the future
- sense of values that are fruitful ▫ known as a leader who listens to the Holy Spirit
- knows when to tighten or to hand over the reins
- prepared to let go of ideas/"dead" visions/plans/praxis if things do not work or if the timing is not right

Conflicting Views of Leadership

"The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave." (Matthew 20:25-27)

"Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me." (John 12:26)

"Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart." (Matthew 11:29)

"Those princes who have done great things have held good faith of little account, and have known how to circumvent the intellect of men by craft, and in the end have overcome those who have relied on their word."

"Everyone sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are,"

"A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promise." Nicolo Machiavelli, 1469-1527

"It's hard to be humble, when you are so great." Author unknown