

MBC MEN'S TRAINING

LEADERSHIP TRACK: COURAGEOUS CHURCHMEN

CLASS 2: THE DYNAMICS OF LEADERSHIP

- January 9: A Biblical Theology of Servant Leadership
- February 13: The Dynamics of Leadership (Chapters 1-5)
- March 6: The Dangers of Leadership – Part I (Chapters 8-10)
- April 10: The Dangers of Leadership – Part II (Chapters 6-7, 11-12)
- May 15: The Development of Leadership (Chapters 13-14)

INTRODUCTION

- “Contemporary models of corporate and secular leadership all seem to stress things like the tricks and techniques for leveraging authority to get maximum results, how to increase one’s clout, or how to cultivate a powerful image. Illustrations and explanations of leadership principles usually appeal to corporate CEOs, politicians, celebrities, or army generals as the primary models of leadership. The contemporary notion of leadership is all about dominion, fame, material success, authority, stylishness, and similar issues. The image of the leader is paramount. There are whole books on how to perfect a more urbane style in dress and mannerisms in order to maximize one’s power over others through a subtle form of intimidation.”¹
- The Lord has called men to spiritual leadership, both in the home and in the church.
- “Seasoned or just beginning, we’re expected to make difficult decisions, wisely navigate ethical dilemmas, protect and provide for others, model godly character, and remain steadfast for as long as we live.”²
- However, as we think of leadership in the church, what is it that makes a godly leader? What are the qualities that characterize a man that can effectively lead and influence others?

¹ John MacArthur, “Foreword,” in *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Biblical Resources, 2018), 3.

² *Ibid*, 7.

- As seen above, we can often bring in worldly ideologies and motivations into the church. However, it is not wise to assume that we can pursue leadership with earthly means and produce spiritual fruit.
- The question we need to ponder is, “What does God look for in a leader in the church?” What does it mean to be a courageous churchman?
- With that in mind, this study will cover the dynamics of faithful leadership, looking at the makeup of the man himself, the dangers of leadership, which come both from without and within, and how to develop leadership in the church, producing a continual chain of godly men that will take up that mantle of leadership.
- In our first section, we will hone in on what makes an effective leader, namely, a man who possesses a “compelling life of fearless conviction and a transcendent, divine message.”³

CHAPTER 1: A LIFE WORTH FOLLOWING

- As we spoke of last time, leadership can be defined, simply, as influence.
- “Simply defined, influence is a power affecting a person, thing, or event. With reference to leadership, it is the ability to *impact, persuade, and convince* others to follow a particular course and achieve named objectives. Influence may be reduced to two concepts: (1) *living a life* compelling enough to follow; (2) *communicating a message* compelling enough to hear.”⁴
 - **1 Timothy 4:16** - *Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do, you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*
 - **1 Timothy 3:2** - *An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach...*
 - **Colossians 3:16** - *Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another...*
- “Tragically, in today’s personality-driven culture where leaders gain influence by charisma, jetset lifestyles, shock-speech, or anti-tradition rhetoric, the noble qualities of biblical leadership are marginalized.”⁵
- Wragg goes on to describe the dangers and consequences of that kind of leadership (pgs. 14-15).

³ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 8.

⁴ *Ibid*, 13 (emphasis added).

⁵ *Ibid*, 14.

- This sets the stark contrast of biblical leadership with “the secular culture [which] reduces leadership to what sells in the public arena.”⁶
- When we are confronted with these realities and the temptations of our own flesh, we have to consider the question that must undergird any ministry effort: “Whose kingdom am I trying to build?”

The Age of Pragmatism and Gimmicks

- In this section, Wragg emphasizes that true spiritual influence is a gift from God, which ultimately cannot be manufactured through our efforts alone.
- “Any philosophy of leadership or influence which trades the supernatural work of God for man-made imitations will eventually degenerate into trite solutions and pragmatic goals.”⁷
- Rather than boldly proclaiming the gospel of Christ to the world, the church begins to bend and conform to the world in an effort to win the world.
- While the desire may be to make the word of God more palatable to the world (which, in itself is misguided – 1 Cor 1:18 - *For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing...*) it results in compromise. The church, and its leaders, begin to look more like the world, not the other way around.
- The result: “the contemporary church has been hemorrhaging truth and pumping in self-worship at such a rate that unbelievers, longing to drown their guilt and angst in religious renewal, find church-going a welcome and *undemanding* refuge.”⁸
- “We don’t have enough faith in the power of God’s Word to penetrate a hardened heart. [We] think it’s necessary to have ... entertainment (“pre-evangelism”) to soften people up and prepare them to receive the Word.”⁹
- How does this speak to the area of leadership?
 - This begins with the leadership!
 - As leaders seek to use worldly means or have a warped view of achievement in ministry, it can begin to warp our perspective on the goal and means of ministry success.

⁶ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 16.

⁷ *Ibid*, 16.

⁸ *Ibid*, 19.

⁹ Phillip Johnson, “What’s Wrong with Jumping on and off the Fad Wagons?” July 28, 2005, <http://phillipjohnson.blogspot.com/2005/07/whats-wrong-with-jumping-on-and-off.html>.

- “Leaders who make a habit of relying on natural talent, glibness, cutting edge marketing, or raw worldliness create a façade of apparent progress, but the results over time reveal a glaring lack of depth.”¹⁰
- Leaders in the church can begin to think that it is their efforts/talents/skills/ambitions/vision that is the cause for apparent success is ministry.
- When that happens, as Tripp says, “Then you begin to assess yourself as capable rather than needy, as strong rather than weak, and as self-sufficient rather than dependent.”¹¹
 - **1 Corinthians 4:7** - *For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*
 - **2 Corinthians 4:7** - *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;*
- What does this kind of leadership do to the church?
 - “Rather than a deeper walk with Christ, the result is a congregation pooling in a cul-de-sac of stagnant, ingrown, and carnal ministry.”¹²

Leaders are Divinely Appointed

- “Christian leaders are essentially Christ-made. While they possess natural abilities it is the Holy Spirit who enables them to use them to the benefit of the church. He is Christ’s gift to them ... Christ makes and provides leaders for His church ... Leaders in other spheres may sometimes describe themselves as self-made or duly qualified because of examinations passed, but not so Christian leaders.”¹³
- True leaders in the church are those who realize that they are appointed by the Lord, enabled through the Holy Spirit, heralds and approved workmen of the word of God, and who understand faithfulness to the Lord as the true metric of success in ministry.
 - **1 Corinthians 4:1-2** - *Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.* (namely, loyal to Christ and faithful to the task)

¹⁰ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 20.

¹¹ Paul David Tripp, *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 46.

¹² *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 20.

¹³ Derek Prime, *A Christian’s Guide to Leadership for the Whole Church* (Faverdale North, Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2005), 29-30.

- Looking, then, to leadership in the church, this should cause us to:
 - Put our confidence in the word of God (2 Tim 3:14-17; 1 Pet 1:23; 2 Pet 1:3)
 - Realize our own inadequacy (John 15:4-5; 2 Cor 2:16b)
 - Rely upon the Lord for spiritual fruit (1 Cor 3:5-7)
 - Give glory to the Lord, not ourselves, when there is fruit (1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 4:7)
 - Prize holiness over worldly metrics of success (1 Pet 1:14-16)
- “Therefore, the measure of effective leadership is grounded in the progress of sanctification, first for leaders, then for those they influence.”¹⁴

CHAPTER 2: GOD LOOKS AT THE HEART

- As we said in our first week, God cares more about who you are as a leader than what you do are a leader. Both are important, but character is weighted much more in Scripture.
 - 15 requirements listed in 1 Tim 3:1-7 for an elder – only 3 of them don’t speak to the man’s character (able to teach, manages his household well, not a recent convert)
 - **1 Timothy 4:16** - *Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do, you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*
- As Wragg states, “The power of our influence grows out of the soil of a deep devotion to Christ.”¹⁵
- What God’s people need most from leadership is not charisma or eloquent rhetoric; it’s your own personal holiness!
- “Spiritual credibility springs from a holy and pure life. Righteousness may not get the popular vote, but it should have no rivals in the preparation of an effective leader. From the pulpit to the pew nothing is more stabilizing, more admirable, more compelling among the leadership qualifications than our personal holiness.”¹⁶

Reality Ministry and the Absence of Shame

- Compare the above with what we see in the church today: those who are seeking to be “missional-minded” by immersing themselves in the culture of the world, and seeing nothing wrong with being like the world (passions, worldly practices, explicit speech, etc.) so that they can attain cultural relevance and greater popularity with the world.

¹⁴ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 23.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 25.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 26.

- These concepts have tenacles into the church, with the easy-believism/free grace movement, “pastors” who embrace liberal ideologies (abortion, LGBTQ+, etc.), or those who stand before the congregation “smothering the sermon in salacious speech and explicit vulgarity for the sake of a laugh!”
- How does this affect the church?
 - “All this lowbrow, prime-time sensuality results in a new church environment where the lowest common spiritual character is deemed “normal” for believers. Anyone striving to be holy is quickly labeled “irrelevant,” because, after all, “no real Christian today can live like that!”
 - Without the fervent pursuit of godliness, preaching loses all authority, discipleship becomes cold duty, and prayer is hypocrisy.”¹⁷

“Fashionable” Leaders

- Paired with the threat of carnality becoming commonplace in the church, there is a threat when leadership and influence is cultivated more by the superficial attractiveness/”curb appeal” than personal holiness and godly character.
- There are many men in leadership within megachurches throughout the country who have great influence, large congregations, huge followings, seemingly fruitful ministries, and yet, are qualified as leaders through worldly metrics rather than biblical metrics.
- “This is not unlike today’s notion that strong leadership is the ability to attract the attention of the mob and wield its influence. Crowds may be mobilized, managed, and inspired to achieve a goal, but without the rudder of moral virtue people are dashed on the rocks of pride and turf battles.”¹⁸
- Wragg would later quote Henry T. and Richard Blackaby in saying that these kinds of men are really only pseudo-leaders who have the image, but no actual substance.
- This may gain you a following, but the question is, “Where are they following you to?”
- “It is the heart in relationship to God that makes us useful in spiritual leadership. The greatest damage occurs in the lives of others when we assume that power and position will make up for a lifestyle lacking in moral uprightness.”¹⁹

¹⁷ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 28-29.

¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 31-32.

CHAPTER 3: STRENGTH SHEATHED IN MEEKNESS

- It's telling that after a general discussion on the heart and character of a leader in Christ's body, the first aspect of a man's character that Wragg presses into is humility and meekness.

Second Class Virtue?

- It's telling for a couple of reasons:
 - Humility and meekness/gentleness are clearly emphasized heavily in Scripture:
 - **Ephesians 4:1-3** - *Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
 - **1 Peter 5:5-6** - *You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE**. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time...*
 - **Matthew 23:10-12** - *Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.*
 - **Philippian 2:3-5** - *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus...*
 - **1 Thessalonians 2:7** - *But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.*
 - Humility and meekness/gentleness are not, in the world's eyes, always seen as a positive quality for a leader.
 - Instead, meekness or gentleness can often be mistaken for weakness or an inability to have strong (by the world's standards) leadership

- “A humble disposition is deemed weak and therefore, says popular opinion, not conducive to motivating others toward great things.”²⁰
 - Like Israel with Saul, many today see the external strength and might of a leader as the key qualities of leadership that they desire or deem more effective, to the end that humility and meekness are not as desirable to world as they are to the Lord.
 - However, our leadership should model that of Christ, who exemplified humble, servant leadership.
 - **Matthew 11:28-30** - *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*
 - **Matthew 20:26-28** - *It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*
- What, then, does humility in leadership look like?
 - “The key to a servant leader’s heart is humility. People with humility don’t think less of themselves; they just think of themselves less.”²¹
 - Does this mean that humble and meek leadership in the church is inherently without strength?
 - Scripture never separates strength and meekness. Rather, in rightly defining them both, there is a wonderful harmony that comes when a leader has strength that is sheathed in meekness.
 - Another way we have said this before is that meekness is not a lack of strength. Rather, it is strength that is under control.
 - No one would doubt the strength of Christ’s leadership. He often confronted the Pharisees when needed, and He was not afraid to correct and refute error.
 - At the same time, He was the model for humble, meek, servant leadership.
 - Therefore, humility and meekness do not hinder the work of strong leadership. Rather, they channel that strength toward biblical goals and motivations.

²⁰ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 34.

²¹ Ken Blanchard, “Reflections on Encourage the Heart,” in *Christian Reflections on The Leadership Challenge* in Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, eds. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 104.

- “There is certainly nothing inherently wrong with teamwork strategies or innovative methods, but if not sheathed in meekness, such techniques become focused on moving the machinery of ministry forward at the expense of character. Our call is the cultivation of humble and dependent submission.”²²

Meekness and Leadership: The Search for Balance

- How do we balance these together? Ultimately, this humility in leadership points us away from ourselves and focuses us back on our dependence on the Lord.
- “The proper starting point begins outside of us. Humility is forged in the fires of an unmistakably clear vision of God, a biblically rich and abiding perspective of the cross, and a robust sense of man’s desperate sin-condition! [...] A right view of God instantly brings us to the end of ourselves.”²³
 - Wragg highlights the testing of this through how we deal with praise in ministry (*see notes from Lead, Ch 1 – Achievement*)
- This balance is struck, then, in having a right view of God and a right view of self.
 - **Psalm 8:1,3-4** - ***O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! [...] When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him?***
- We must remember that, if we are used of the Lord for ministry in any capacity, we are simply stewards of that ministry, appointed by the Lord and used as instruments for His kingdom purposes and for His own glory!
 - **1 Cor 3:5-6** - *What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? **Servants** through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but **God was causing the growth.***
 - **1 Cor 4:1, 7** - *Let a man regard us in this manner, as **servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.** [...] For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*
 - **2 Cor 4:7** - *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power **will be of God and not from ourselves;***

²² *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 36.

²³ *Ibid*, 37-38.

- **2 Cor 12:11** - *I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.*
- “Nothing we accomplish makes us significant at all! On the contrary, our usefulness points to God’s supreme worth and preeminent significance. We sometimes behave as though our talents and gifts are indispensable to God’s redemptive plan, but Scripture teaches the opposite.”²⁴
- This transforms the concept of leadership and ministry from something that I pursue for my own desires and motivations to an undeserved mercy of the Lord, wherein I, a humble clay pot, have the privilege to be used of the Lord for His great work.
- This helps to reframe our thinking in a number of ways:
 - Burdens in leadership are opportunities to draw us toward greater dependence on the Lord, whose grace is sufficient for us (2 Cor 12:9)
 - Successes in leadership are opportunities to praise God, who works through us in spite of our weaknesses (2 Cor 12:10; 2 Tim 2:21)
 - We see leadership as a stewardship. It’s not *my* ministry; it is the Lord’s ministry (1 Cor 4:2)
 - We become increasingly drawn to God’s word to stay on track in ministry (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- “If we aspire to lead with humility, we must be willing to die to all that we hold dear. [...] Godly leadership is an exchange of our reputation for the glory of His, our expectations for the joy of His yoke, and our personal gain for His perfect design.”²⁵
- The greatest challenge to this, of course, is our own flesh, thinking of ourselves as more significant than we really are and thinking that attaining some form of leadership means that we have reached a “higher level” of Christianity.
- Nothing could be further from the truth! In fact, there are *more* temptations in the flesh that come from leadership.
- “The moment we imagine we’ve exhaustively assessed the sin of our hearts, we have planted, watered, and harvested a crop of pride.”²⁶
- Conversely, when we are killing that sin of pride, leading humbly, and when God’s significance, not our own, captivates our affections, God’s people will thrive!
- In this, leadership can either be the greatest gift or the greatest hinderance to growth in the church.

²⁴ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 39.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 48.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 49.

CHAPTER 4: THE FREEDOM OF INTEGRITY

- As that humility and dependence upon the Lord and His word are forged within our heart, that will begin to come out and produce leaders of integrity.
- “To boil it down, integrity is the consistent harmony of convictions and conduct. Leaders who unswervingly live according to the principles they claim as inviolable are full of integrity. The opposite, of course, is hypocrisy.”²⁷
- Integrity in leadership is developed through conviction in the word of God that produces leadership consistent with godly character and an unwavering resolve to not compromise morally or doctrinally.

Integrity and the Conscience

- The Lord, through his common grace, has given all men a conscience as a means, though fallible, to convict us and to develop that integrity within us.
- Of course, the conscience is only as helpful as it is informed by Scripture.
- “When we inform the conscience with biblical truth we are telling it to accurately hold us in check against the standard of Scripture. The conscience itself is not our benchmark, but if kept clear and clean it becomes a powerful instrument of integrity as it drives us toward the grand, inflexible benchmark—God’s Word.”²⁸
- Conversely, the conscience can be seared or callous if it is informed by or dulled by our flesh (1 Tim 4:1-2; Titus 1:15). Therefore, Scripture commands us to cultivate a clean conscience (1 Tim 1:19) so that we will not be susceptible to spiritual shipwreck (1 Tim 1:18-19).
 - “If, instead of resolutely fleeing sin, we suppress the truth in rationalization and compromise, the clearest resonation of right and wrong will become faint.”²⁹
- This is a constant spiritual battle. Leaders must be those that are continually drawing from the well of Scripture, resolving to live God-honoring lives and to lead from a place of dependence. If we’re not putting concerted effort toward this, we run the risk of searing our conscience.
- Time and truth always go hand in hand, and the small, seemingly insignificant compromises of today will erode tomorrow’s resolve.³⁰

²⁷ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 53.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 55.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 56.

³⁰ *Ibid*.

A Truth-Sensitive Inner Life

- Wragg goes on to speak of how this kind of integrity is developed within a man, observed through principles from the apostle Paul in his ministry to the Thessalonian church.
- First, Paul invited open scrutiny.
 - **1 Thess 2:1-11** - *For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. [...] For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness— [...] But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. [...] For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children...*
 - A leader of integrity does not hide anything or lead apart from the people that he serves. A life of integrity is a life out in the open and one that invites accountability.
 - Paul could invite scrutiny because his life was laid bare, his convictions known, and his resolve clear.
- Second, Paul served with spiritual courage.
 - **1 Thess 2:3-9** - *For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness— nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. [...] For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.*
 - A leader of integrity is a leader that does not shrink back from declaring the truth of God's word.
 - While we invite accountability, that should not lead us to care more about what men think. Rather, our greatest concern is that our Master find us faithful.

- “Do they trust the work and the Word of God? Do they unfold the Scriptures without shrinking back? Do they give an answer with biblical clarity? Do they willingly invite questions about doctrine, ministry, character, service, etc.? If not, the sheep will become vulnerable, and slander will eventually have its way in the church. **Integrity marked by courageous leadership is a tremendous safeguard.**”³¹
- Finally, Paul retained unashamed transparency before God.
 - **1 Thess 2:3-5** - *For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as **we have been approved by God** to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, **but God who examines our hearts**. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—**God is witness**—*
 - Integrity in leadership must be honest about our own flesh, knowing that it is God Himself who examines our hearts.
 - We cannot be those who try to rationalize our sin (*see pg. 61 for examples*), because it will, as Wragg states, “always give birth to sin and ruin.”
 - Integrity necessitates being honest about our sin, keeping short account of that sin (Ps 51), truly confessing it to the Lord, and repenting of it.
 - “When a leader is “a man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam 13:14), rationalization finds no place.”³²
- “...it is much harder to rationalize sin when *our minds are saturated with the Word of God and our wills are swiftly brought into subjection.*”³³
- If we are to be men of integrity, we must commit to studying and practicing the word of God (Ezra 7:10), and we must be those who pay close attention to ourselves and our ministry (1 Tim 4:16).

CHAPTER 5: STAMINA FOR THE LONG HAUL

- With all of this in view, how do we think of enduring, effective ministry? What is the quality that is needed most in leadership to accomplish this?
- In one word: faithfulness!

³¹ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 59-60.

³² *Ibid*, 63.

³³ *Ibid*.

- It is faithfulness, “the cultivation of godly character, practiced over the long haul that has lasting and profound effectiveness.”³⁴
- This is the quality that is required for every steward of the Lord (1 Cor 4:2), but it is especially crucial for leadership in the church.
- Unfortunately, though, “many men start their ministry with a servant’s heart, but disillusionment can set in after years of serving alongside those who never reciprocate. In spite of a strong commitment to integrity, others experience personal failure and ministry disappointment which tempt them to hide in hypocrisy. Even the ability to inspire and mobilize others to reach goals, if selfishly motivated, can lead to distrust and hopelessness.”³⁵
- Men can start strong in ministry and leadership, but without a healthy reliance upon the Holy Spirit and the word of God, they can either drift toward worldly leadership or moral failure, or they can get “burnt out” through striving in their own flesh.
- How, then, can a leader remain faithful over the long haul?

Strengthened by Grace

- **2 Timothy 2:1** - *You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*
- Faithfulness in leadership is a joint endeavor, a synergistic relationship in which leaders are called to be strong and remain faithful, knowing that it is only possible through the sustaining grace of God.
- On the one hand, we must know that “the grace that saves the sinner is the power that must supply the sinner.”³⁶
- Additionally, we must remember: “Faithfulness is not forged in passivity. God’s power will sustain us, but the means by which divine strength is enjoyed is our proactive striving (Phil 2:12–13).”³⁷
- So then, though faithfulness in leadership is a charge to men that they must follow, it is empowered and sustained completely by the grace of the Lord in Christ!
- It is these kinds of men that the church needs!
 - As we look at the tasks of discipleship, shepherding, serving, teaching, leading, and caring for the flock of God, we need faithful, qualified men to take up the mantle. (2 Tim 2:2)

³⁴ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 66.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 65.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 67.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

- In Paul’s final charge to Timothy, he gives three illustrations to help him understand what faithfulness in leadership over the long haul requires: the focused soldier, the disciplined athlete, and the hard-working farmer.
- **2 Timothy 2:3-4** - *Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.*
 - Faithful leaders aren’t those who seek to be “relevant” culturally. They are not concerned about how they are viewed by the culture.
 - “[E]ndurance comes from the knowledge that God’s Word *is never shackled* by cultural paradigm shifts or rampant unbelief.”³⁸
 - Rather, their greatest concern is remaining loyal to the one who enlisted them. They care most of what Christ thinks of them, remaining faithful to follow the orders of their commanding officer.
 - “One of the reasons men “burn out” in the service of Christ is the excess vanity and worldly distraction they simply refuse to jettison, which always leads to unfulfilled expectations.”³⁹
 - We must be willing to disentangle from those weights and sin that so easily entangle (Wragg speaks of “sins of fear and worry about the cares of life”, “attachment to possessions and comfort”, “unresolved bitterness”, “strong appetite for earthly amusements”, and “fear of man”.)
- **2 Timothy 2:5** - *Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.*
 - “It is simply impossible to endure as a leader if you aren’t willing to strenuously prepare and train ‘according to the rules.’”⁴⁰
 - Faithfulness in ministry cannot be accomplished unless we are seeking to do God’s business God’s way.
 - A faithful leader will be one who is dedicated to the spiritual disciplines, one who “exercises control in all things” and who discipline their bodies for the purpose of godliness, so that they would not be disqualified (1 Cor 9:25-27; 1 Tim 4:7-8).

³⁸ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 70.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 72.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 74.

- “Leaders cannot afford to take a vacation from the spiritual disciplines. Bible reading and study, prayer and fasting, evangelism, meditation, giving, spiritual service, and worship are the means given to us by God for the “Spirit-filled pursuit of Godliness.”⁴¹
- **2 Timothy 2:6** - *The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.*
 - “The soldier has the thrill of victory. The athlete has the moment of crowning. What is the farmer metaphor picture? It pictures a man who works to the point of total exhaustion in perpetual humdrum duty. Not like a soldier who wears the badges of his courage, who knows the glory of victory. Not like an athlete who carries the crown on his head and ascends the place where he receives the plaudits of men. The farmer, he plows and sows and tends and reaps, early and late. He fights the frost; he fights the heat. He fights too much water, too little water, bugs, weeds. Patiently, patiently waits, works to see the crop come in, and mostly does it all by himself. No great excitement, no great thrill, perpetual humdrum routine, duty. [...] You plow; you sow; you tend; you reap. You wait; you pray; you hope. There’s no exhilaration to speak of. There’s no competition to get your adrenaline moving. It’s just hard work.”⁴²
 - This isn’t the picture of our culture today. We are, generally, a culture of instant gratification. We want things instantly; we don’t like to wait.
 - However, faithfulness, by definition, requires time. It is steady, consistent, resolved, godly leadership that the Lord desires of men in the church.
- May we be men of character, integrity, dependence, and enduring faithfulness until God calls us home.
- **2 Timothy 4:7-8** - *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

RECOMMENDED READING

- *Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership in the Church* by Paul David Tripp
- *Leadership* by Chuck Swindoll
- *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* by J. Oswald Sanders
- *Called to Lead: 26 Leadership Lessons from the Life of the Apostle Paul* by John MacArthur

⁴¹ *Courageous Churchmen: Leaders Compelling Enough to Follow*, 75.

⁴² <https://www.gty.org/sermons/55-6/the-elements-of-a-strong-spiritual-life-part-2>