

MBC MEN'S TRAINING

LEADERSHIP TRACK: COURAGEOUS CHURCHMEN

CLASS 6: THE DEVELOPMENT 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

- The Lord has called men to spiritual leadership, both in the home and in the church.
- “[W]e’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.”¹
- 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?
- 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?”
- 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 this section, we will continue to discuss the dangers of leadership. However, this time we are not looking outward at the dangers of conflict, but inward, looking at the kinds of leaders that God rejects, what happens when a leader defects, and how to guard against it as watchmen who are on guard for ourselves and all that the Lord has given us charge of as stewards.

¹ *Courageous Churchmen*, 7.

WHY FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT?

- A lack of leadership development and training is devastating to a church.
- The Training of future leaders is not only a command in Scripture (as we'll see in 2 Tim 2:2 and other related passages), but it is also vital to the health of a church.
 - Many churches begin strong, running off of the efforts of the current leadership team, only to slowly wither and fall apart as leaders fall, age out, or get burnt out.
 - Without a plan for bringing on new leaders, a local church will likely have a short expiration date. While the Lord will build His church (universal), he has delegated the leadership of the church (local) to elders, who are called to equip the saints for the work of service (Eph 4:12).
 - When that is not happening, the church suffers.
- Additionally, without a plan of succession in ministry at any level, there is a danger and temptation to build a ministry on a single person, rather than viewing that person as a link in the ministry leadership chain.
 - “[G]ood leaders realize that their usefulness is in the hands of God, and they never see themselves as indispensable to the work.”²
 - “No one is so vital that he can’t be replaced!”³
- If we have a view that we are the one making ministry happen, we have raised ourselves beyond the bounds of a faithful steward and slave of Christ, and we have made ministry an idol.
 - Not only that, but we’ll also have no desire to influence others toward future leadership.
 - This will prevent the body from using their gifts, it will hurt the overall growth of the church, and it will give evidence of ineffective leadership.
- So, then, we must understand that the leadership development process is of the utmost importance.
 - Remember, leadership is influence.
 - We point others to Christ, and we empower them to use their gifts to do the same for others.
- With that in mind, we want to observe a simple formula for leadership development in the church:
 - Identifying potential leaders
 - Examining potential leaders
 - Training potential leaders

² *Courageous Churchmen*, 187–188.

³ *Ibid.*

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL LEADERS

Identify Faithful Men

- **2 Timothy 2:2** - *The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*
- What does it mean to be a faithful man?
 - Within the confines of this verse the faithfulness involves at least the ability to listen with faith to the things handed down as truth from Paul to Timothy.
 - He must have the character of a leader.
 - Integrity in his personal life (1 Timothy 3:2-3, 8-9)
 - Authenticity in his family life (1 Timothy 3:4-5)
 - Credibility in his family life (1 Timothy 3:11-12)
 - Reliability in his spiritual life (1 Timothy 3:10)
 - Questions to consider:
 - Is he genuinely converted to Christ?
 - Is he faithful in his understanding of and commitment to God's Word?
 - Is he faithful in applying the Bible to his thinking and life?
 - Is he blameless in his reputation and example of godliness?
 - Is he proven in his ability to lead and manage a family.
 - Is he faithful and trustworthy?
 - Is there any past or present sin that could bring dishonor to Christ's name?

Identify Able Men

- **2 Timothy 2:2** - *The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*
- What does it mean to be an able man?
 - An able man is one who has or can develop the ability to pass these on in a convincing way to another generation to the end that the truth finds similar root in those lives and they are equipped to continue the life-transference to yet another generation.
 - He must be teachable (Psalm 25:9; Proverbs 11:2).
 - He must be available.

- Questions to consider:
 - Is he able to articulate his faith in Christ?
 - Is he gifted in his ability to teach others?
 - Is he humble and teachable?
 - Does he work at evangelism?
 - Is he a natural communicator?
 - Does he serve others without being asked?
 - Does he show leadership in his school, work, or sporting life?
 - Are others following him because of his ministry?
 - Do people respond to his ministry positively?
 - Is his family life healthy?
 - Does he relate well to others?
 - Is his spouse committed to ministry as well?
 - Is he emotionally stable and tough?
 - Will he be able to face criticism, disappointment, and failure?

Identify Aspiring Men

- **1 Timothy 3:1** - *It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.*
- **Aspire** (ὀρέγεται). Originally meant to reach after, to stretch forth. The verb occurs only two other times in the NT. Paul uses it in 6:10 to describe those who long for wealth. The writer of Hebrews employs it to describe the longing of God's people for heaven (11:16). It has the sense of stretching out, reaching out or striving after something.
 - The present tense views this as more than a passing interest, but as a continuing desire that lives within the individual.
 - There is something within, compelling this man to become an overseer.
 - An aspiration such as this causes a young man to study, labor, and sacrifice in order to equip himself for leadership in the church.
 - If that desire is there, there is nothing wrong with it!
 - In fact, it is a good thing, a necessary thing! It is a fine work he desires to do.

- Questions to consider:
 - Does he aspire to godly character?
 - Is he reading and asking questions about the Bible and theology?
 - Does he aspire to study diligently?
 - Does he aspire to shepherd the sheep (leading, feeding, protecting)?
 - Does he aspire to evangelize? To counsel? To exhort the flock? To lead the flock of his own home?
- Aspirations to lead are not enough.
 - John Kitchen writes, “the desire to be an overseer by itself does not qualify one for the office. Such a desire is a good initial signal to check for the qualifications that follow. An overseer should desire to serve in this way, but the desire may be found also among those who do not meet the qualifications.”⁴
 - Alexander Strauch says something similar, “God provides objective, observable qualifications to test the subjective desire of all who seek the office of overseer. Desire alone is not enough; it must be matched by good character and spiritual capability.”⁵
- No one should lead God’s church without a desire to do so (1 Peter 5:2).

EXAMINING POTENTIAL LEADERS

- All of these markers and raw materials are key to identifying a potential leader.
- Along with that, it is necessary to see these things over a season.
 - **1 Timothy 6:20** – *O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”*
 - **1 Timothy 4:14-16** - *Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*
- Notice the reference to time not only in the ongoing sanctification of a leader, but also in the affirmation of that leader by others. That can only come through time and testedness.

⁴ Kitchen, The Pastoral Epistles for Pastors, 123.

⁵ Alexander Strauch, Biblical Eldership (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1995), 188.

- Paul knew faithfulness was not guaranteed.
- We all must watch our own hearts and be held accountable.
- What do we mean by testing?
 - It is primarily placing the man’s qualifications, teaching abilities, and ministry opportunities under congregational pressure over time so that they can be evaluated by the church and leadership.
 - “I’m thinking specifically of identifying called men, evaluating their call, assessing their character, and positioning them to be fruitful in their call.”⁶
- Qualities to consider:
 - Faithfulness in little tasks (“When a young man asks me about being mentored for leadership in the church, I want to know where and how he has already been serving.”)
 - Acceptance of responsibility for failure (“men who hide weakness and blame others where they are responsible create nothing but trouble for a leadership team”) this calls for genuine honesty and teachability.
 - Comfort among gifted peers (those men who demonstrate a contentedness at the abilities and effectiveness of others are those we need to spend time with, mentor, and cultivate.
 - Patient with inadequacy in others (men who demonstrate graciousness and forbearance with others).
 - Gracious acceptance of criticism (they value self-examination, they’re not easily offended).
 - Passion and optimism (“habitual cynics don’t make good shepherds”)
 - Trust from close friends (the men you will serve with must be trusted)
- Is he willing to spend his life for Christ in the labor of the sheep.
 - The life of a shepherd is involved and engulfed.
- “But shepherds stink not only because they smell like sheep. They stink because they smell like sweat. And blood, too. Like common laborers, their faces are streaked and their backs are bent. Like common soldiers, their eyes are strained and their arms are scarred. Like both, they often feel overspent and undersupplied. And they’ve made peace with the fact that this kind of work requires as much. You’ll never meet a good shepherd who is still shower-fresh by the afternoon.”⁷

⁶ Harvey, Am I Called?, 54.

⁷ The Pastor and Counseling: The Basics of Shepherding Members in Need, 9Marks, 23.

- Paul Tripp offers some great evaluative questions:
- “What does he really love, and what does he despise? What are his hopes, dreams, and fears? What are the deep desires that fuel and shape the way he does ministry? What are the anxieties that have the potential to derail or paralyze him? How accurate is his view of himself? Is he open to confrontation, critique, and encouragement of others? Is he committed to his own sanctification? Is he open about his own temptation weaknesses, and failures? Is he ready to listen to and defer to the wisdom of others? Does he see pastoral ministry as a community project? Does he have a tender, nurturing heart? Is he warm and hospitable, shepherd and champion to those who are suffering? What character qualities would his wife and children use to describe him? Does he sit under his own preaching? Is his heart broken and his conscience regularly grieved as he looks at himself in the mirror of the Word? How robust, consistent, joyful, and vibrant is his devotional life? Does his ministry to others flow out of the vibrancy of his devotional communion with the Lord? Does he hold himself to high standards, or is he willing to give way to mediocrity? Is he sensitive to the experiences and needs of those who minister alongside of him? Is he one who incarnates the love and grace of the Redeemer? Does he overlook minor offenses? Is he ready and willing to forgive? Is he critical and judgmental? Is the public pastor a different person from the private husband and dad? Does he take care of his physical self? Does he numb himself with too much social media or television? How successful has he been in pastoring the congregation that is his family?”⁸

TRAINING POTENTIAL LEADERS

- **2 Timothy 2:2** - *The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*
- The Apostle Paul leaves his parting exhortation to Timothy at a time when there is a crisis in the church’s leadership.
- Paul exhorts Timothy to set the church on a firm course (1 Tim 3:14–15), establishing qualified leadership who are faithful to the call. A key aspect of Timothy’s job is to train–up new leaders so that the church will be on solid footing for subsequent generations.
- Paul’s rallying charge remains the foundation for training leaders today.

⁸ Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling*, 62

Train Leaders in Conviction (“the things which you heard”)

- Biblical leadership is convictional leadership rooted in the apostolic message of the gospel, centered on the full glory of the Triune God.
 - Paul tells Timothy that his message need not be original, but it must be faithful to the apostolic message. He writes, “the things which you heard.”
 - This is similar to Jesus’s commission to teach “all that I commanded you” (Matt 28:20), and Paul’s exhortation to “retain the standard of sound words you heard from me” (2 Tim 1:13).
- Church leaders must provide spiritual shape to the convictions of the next generation of leaders.
 - Paul says that the church, not the seminary, is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim 3:15).
 - How do we pass on solid biblical convictions to the next generation? The church’s leaders should be positioned to offer basic training in areas of hermeneutics, theology, sermon preparation, pastoral ministry, and other vital disciplines for aspiring leaders.
 - It is here that seminaries can serve a vital role in coming alongside churches that have sparse resources or lack the academic accountability that more structured environments provide.

Train Leaders in Character (“entrust to faithful men”)

- Those who lead the church must be above reproach in all aspects of their lives or they are unfit for the ministry (cf. 1 Tim 3:1ff; Titus 1:5ff).
 - Paul’s statement to “entrust to faithful men” is not a proof text for the unbiblical notion of apostolic succession. Rather, Paul’s emphasis is on the character of the men being trained.
 - These are men who are trustworthy and dependable. Each generation of church leadership is to “entrust” (lit. to hand over for safe keeping) the ministry of the gospel to others.
- Practically, mentors can help these candidates by identifying particular life patterns before aspiring pastors are thrust into leadership.
 - Do they make themselves available to serve? Are they accepting responsibility for various tasks? Are they trustworthy in their relationships in the church as well as in their reputation toward those outside?
 - The church doesn’t need any more celebrity, but it can always benefit from faithful men who will serve the needs of the flock with gospel-focused grace.
- A faithful man is one who can be trusted with small responsibilities, he is faithful in little tasks, he is faithful in sound doctrine, and his life is exemplary.

Train Leaders in Communication (“able to teach others”)

- These faithful men must be able to communicate the word of truth to the sheep.
 - A leader must be able to rightly interpret and teach the word of God. In 1 Tim 3, Paul says that all elders must be able to teach.
 - This does not mean that all leaders will be preachers or even excellent preachers. It means that all leaders, without reservation, must be able to understand and apply the Word of God to the sheep in their care.
- Teach men who can communicate with real people and strengthen the church through its counseling, preaching, and teaching ministries.
 - Younger ministers should discerningly be provided with opportunities to lead, instruct, and guide the flock.
 - I believe many men have burned-out in the ministry because they were thrust forward too quickly. Go slow, but move forward with intentionality.
- Mature leaders should examine the abilities of each candidate as an aspiring leader is given opportunities to preach, teach, visit, and pray.
 - A simple approach, and often overlooked, is to have trainees shadow more seasoned pastors throughout the week. The power and encouragement of example is impossible to duplicate in the classroom.
 - I believe that this will cultivate an atmosphere for disciple-making and shepherd-grooming that will deeply benefit the health of the church.

WHAT’S NEXT?

- **Pray that God would burden the hearts of men in your church for ministry:**
 - Pray for men to have a shepherd’s heart and a real desire to love people.
 - Pray that God will raise up faithful men like this and then get to work applying Paul’s admonition to Timothy.
- **Watch for men who meet the biblical qualifications:**
 - You are looking for evidence of God’s work in men’s life in relation to shepherding God’s people. At the most basic level you are looking for a desire for ministry.

- Growth and maturity should closely follow this as they are trained and given opportunities to serve. Do they meet the biblical qualifications? Are they faithful with small tasks? Do they respond to correction and the sanctifying work of the Word and Spirit?
- Do they desire to study, practice, and teach the Word (e.g., Ezra 7:10). Do they care about people? Do they lead by example (spiritually and practically)? Do they start spiritual conversations? Do they show hospitality to others?
- **Invite faithful men into your life to watch and observe:**
 - From your observations, invite a select group of men as potential leaders to begin participating in the formal training program.
 - Three key areas of observation: classroom instruction, ministry experience, and mentorship.
 - Help them learn to integrate word, life, and ministry.
 - Help test and build godly character through word, prayer, accountability, and modeling.
 - Help them learn that ministry is about people, not programs.
 - Help them learn how to study the Bible and learn theology.
 - Help them learn to train others, developing a “training mindset.”
 - Help them do the work of an evangelist.
- ***Where do you begin?***
 - If you are an older pastor or seasoned minister, bring together a few faithful men and begin to encourage them to this end.
 - Work with each one, looking to provide specific instruction, tangible opportunities, and a guided mentorship that will allow such leaders to flourish as the church grows and matures.
- ***What if you want training?***
 - Pray, watch, and set an example. If you’re a young man desiring to serve in the ministry, humbly approach your church leaders, conveying your desires.
 - Ask your pastors if you can shadow/follow them at appointed times, so you learn the rhythms of daily ministry. Allow a leader into your life to help guide you both academically and spiritually.
 - Whatever you do, don’t rush into a ministry you have not been trained to lead. Use your years of mentorship to observe, support, and learn as much as possible. In God’s timing, He will place you where you need to be. First, however, be faithful where you are.