

# SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

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## Introduction

Without the help and merciful understanding of Jesus Christ it is doubtful if anyone could be a successful spiritual leader according to the Biblical standard established by God the Father.

God has given us the clear and essential principles of Godly leadership in the Bible. Leadership in action is more than just an understanding of Biblical Teaching it is putting God's truthful word to work in our lives.

**The Infuse Program** sponsored by the **Church of God International** intends, as God makes it possible, to teach Biblical Principles of Leadership to young men and women. No matter the program, Church leadership works the best when every member is doing their part. The work of the Infuse Program in the Church of God, International requires the effort of every member in order for the *body of Christ* to function in an effective and healthy manor. The body needs you. Do your best to find a place to serve God, and start contributing whatever time, and talent you have. One of the purposes of the Infuse Program is to help its young men and women discover their gifts and talents.

Jesus Christ is our supreme example and we are responsible for following Him. God is not only a disciplining parent, but also a demanding coach who pushes us to our limits at times and requires our life to be disciplined. Sometimes victory seems hard to reach, but if we persist in following Christ and drawing upon His strength we will be successful. We will then be in a position to encourage those around us who are in need of help and reach out to the world with the Good News of the Gospel of Christ.

## First Principle

**Example: Jesus lived as a perfect example.** “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil” (Matthew 4: 1—11). This temptation by the devil shows us that Jesus was human, and it gave Jesus the opportunity to reaffirm God's plan for His ministry. It also gives us an **example** to follow when we are tempted. Jesus'

temptation was an important demonstration that He was completely sinless. He faced temptation and did not give in.

This time of testing showed that Jesus really was the Son of God, able to overcome Satan and his temptations. A person has not shown true obedience if he or she has never had an opportunity to disobey. We read in Deuteronomy 8: 2 that God led Israel into the wilderness to humble and prove them. He wanted to find out, whether or not they would really obey Him. We too will be tested. Because we know that testing will come, we should be alert and ready for it. Remember, your convictions are only as strong as they hold up under pressure.

God holds us responsible for the example we set. We must not live with only our own survival in mind. Others will follow our example, and we have a responsibility to them if we claim to live for Christ. Our example must make it easier for others to believe, follow, and mature in Christ.

1. A Spiritual Leader should set a good example.

Moses had to learn that he could not do every thing by himself. In Exodus 18 he received some good advice from Jethro, his father-in-law. Moses was weary and the people were weary with Moses trying to handle everything himself.

Moses needed a job description: Job descriptions usually start at the top and work down through other levels in the organization.

According to Exodus 18: 19—21, Moses had three Major responsibilities: (1) to bring the problems of the people to God; (2) to teach them the way they should walk and train them in the work they are to do; (3) to select able leaders to help him bear the burden of leadership.

*The First Responsibility* Moses had is to “bring the problems of the people to God.” Moses must have fulfilled this responsibility through “Prayer.” Prayer reminded Moses of his dependence on god. Sometimes, God withholds His answer for a while in order to deepen our insight into what we really need, broaden our appreciation for His answers, or allow us to mature so we can use His gifts more wisely.

*The Second Responsibility* of Moses was to “teach them the way they should walk and train them in the work they are to do.” Effective teaching relates truth to life. For Moses to be successful in teaching he must make his religious education life oriented. If

Moses wanted the children of Israel to love and follow God he needed to make God a part of their everyday experience. Moses needed to show them that God was involved in all aspects of life.

*The Third Responsibility* of Moses was to select able leaders. Moses had to know what qualities to look for in leaders who could help him. “Select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens” (Exodus 18: 21). Moses was to look for, 1 Men who feared God. 2 Men of truth, 3 men who hated dishonest gain.

Notice that there is no reference in these qualifications to educational background, or any particular skills or talents. These qualities represent men who can be trusted and followed. It is a godly life-style that counts.

### **[Joshua]**

After the death of Moses, the Lord spoke to Joshua and told him that he would lead His people to the land that God was giving them. Deuteronomy 34: 9 states that Joshua had been chosen by Moses to take his place.

Joshua was “filled with the spirit of wisdom.” We will find a list of qualifications in Joshua chapter one, needed for effective leadership.

1. Spiritual strength and courage (Joshua 1: 6, 7, 9).
2. Constant meditation in God’s Word (Joshua 1: 8).
3. Uncompromising obedience to God’s commands (Joshua 1: 7, 8).

God said that if these qualities were in Joshua’s life, he could expect prosperity and success.

To deviate from God’s Word will result in a loss of leadership.

### **[David]**

God chose David as a leader because he had internal strength. “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as

man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16: 7).

Much could be said about David. He was a seer whose prophecies concerning Jesus Christ in the Psalms are quoted throughout the New Testament. He was a scholar whose wisdom came from the Scriptures. “Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts” (Psalm 119: 98—100). David found that the heart that simply keeps to the Law of God reaches, in its simplicity, a higher truth than those with worldly wisdom and has instinctive discernment of good and evil. Worldly wisdom is transient.

It is possible for our strengths to get in the way of trusting God. Those who are strong, attractive, or talented often find it easier to trust in them selves than in God who gave them their gifts. Remember to thank God for what you are and have so that your trust does not become misplaced.

### **[Solomon]**

After a 40-year reign as king of Israel David approached death. He called his son, Solomon to him and charged him to walk in the ways of the Lord, keep His statutes and commandments and His judgments and His testimonies. God told Solomon that he needed a godly life-style through commitment to His commandments. Then He would establish his throne and kingdom (2 Chronicles 7: 17—20). We see once more the example of a spiritual leader.

God plainly set forth certain conditions for Solomon to meet if he wanted the kingdom to continue. If he followed God, Solomon and his descendants would prosper, if he did not, he and the nation would be destroyed. In Deuteronomy 27 and 28, these conditions were outlined before all the people.

“If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of

your herds and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out” (Deuteronomy 28: 1—6).

It would be easy to think of the Old Testament leaders as Giants in leadership ability. But James 5:17 reminds us of Elijah, the great prophet of God, who was a man “with a nature like ours.” What God told Old Testament leaders about spiritual leadership He also expects us to follow. We are not perfect and we need God’s help, but so did they. The example of the leader is fundamental to the effectiveness of what he says and does. It is crucial to the people who must depend upon that leadership.

### **[Gideon]**

In Judges 7: 1—24 we read the story of Gideon. The Lord then said to Gideon, “There are too many of you! I can’t let all of you fight the Midianites, for then the people of Israel will boast to me that they saved themselves by their own strength!” (Judges 7: 2 TLB).

God wants us to appreciate strength without becoming self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is an enemy when it causes us to believe we can always do what needs to be done in our own strength. God wants us to appreciate strength without becoming self-sufficient. God reduced their army from thirty-two thousand to three hundred. With an army this small, there could be no doubt that victory was from God. The men could not take the credit for victory. Like Gideon, we must recognize the danger of fighting in our own *strength*. We can be confident of victory only if we put our confidence in God and not our own self.

### **[Example In The New Testament]**

*Paul’s Advice on Leadership:* The apostle Paul knew the importance of the leader’s example. He said, “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4: 9). In Hebrews 13: 7 he wrote: “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.”

A classic *example* of Paul's advice to leaders is found in Acts 20. He called the elders of the church in Ephesus to meet with him at a place called Miletus. He continually reminded them of his own example of leadership and requested that they follow his steps, to do and live as he had done among them. He was encouraging them to follow his example.

Paul said to Timothy, "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" (2 Timothy 2: 2). This is good advice for all to follow. If well taught believers teach others and commission them, in turn, to teach still others *Infuse* will expand and grow and so will the Church.

Timothy was able to observe Paul's *example* and to learn about leadership through what Paul did. That's the same method our Lord used. Mark 3: 14 states, "And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him." Christ gave His apostles an *example* to follow.

A leader must be obedient to God's word and follow the example of men like Moses, Joshua, David, Paul and, of course, Jesus Christ. A leader must walk with God, be a man or woman of prayer and be obedient to God till Christ is formed in us.

### **[Biblical Qualities of Leadership]**

In 1 Timothy 3 are found the qualifications Paul felt were important for Bishops and Deacons. A careful look at these qualities will reveal that they are not for just the select few, "*but represent what a godly man and woman should really be like.*" These are standards for everyone, and especially for leaders.

The best way to recognize a spiritual leader is to look at his or her life style compared with 1 Timothy 3 and see if these traits are manifested as habits of life. Of course no one is perfect. For all, there will be moments of weakness, and yes, sometimes failure. But the key is whether or not there is an overall pattern of life that reflects these qualities.

### **[Desire for Leadership]**

**First Timothy 3: 1** tells us that if someone desires a position of leadership, he or she desires a good work. However, it should be understood that leadership is not for everyone and it is ok if you do not want to be a leader. Leadership is simply not for everyone. It can be very demanding and sometimes the pressures can be intense.

Note that the position of the ministry is not what is stressed, but the work of the ministry. The emphasis is not the esteem and honor of the profession. The emphasis is upon the work of the ministry. It is the work that is honorable, excellent, beneficial, and productive. The work of the ministry is a “*good work.*”

Remember, it is not the purpose of the Infuse program to provide ordained leadership positions, which is the responsibility of God’s Church. However it is the responsibility of the Infuse Program to seek out those with desire and leadership qualities to help with the many needs, necessities, and tasks that will make Infuse successful.

**First Timothy 3: 4—5** explains that Christian workers and volunteers must not make the mistake of thinking that their work is so important that their families can be ignored. Just the opposite is true. Spiritual Leadership must begin at home. If a man or woman is not willing to care for, discipline, and teach their children, then they will not be qualified to lead others in the Infuse program or Church.

**First Timothy 3: 6** supports the understanding that those new in the faith need to pass the test of time in order to mature. New believers should have a place of service, but not be put into leadership positions until they are firmly grounded in their faith, with a solid Christian life style and knowledge of the Word of God.

#### [Questions Christians Should Ask Themselves]

1. Do you desire in your heart to be a leader?
2. Are you a new believer?
3. Are you devoted to your marital partner?
4. Do your children respond to your leadership?
5. Are you stable in difficult situations
6. Are you humble in evaluating your talents and gifts?
7. Do circumstances overwhelm you?

8. Are you patient with people?
9. Do you yield to others or must you always be right?
10. Are you willing to give up questionable things in order to be a leader?

The purpose of the “**Seven Principles of Biblical Leadership**” is to help Infuse and the Church recognize the Spiritual leaders in our presence. Believers must be careful when they choose leaders. The standards of God’s Word should be carefully observed. God’s people must look for patterns, not moments of weakness. Above all, we need to pray for God’s wisdom and direction.

### [Trustworthy Leaders]

There is nothing more important than that a Leader be found to be “Trustworthy.” Because of the political corruption in government and financial disasters and deception on Wall Street and in leading banking institutions, we have become skeptical and hesitant in supporting, trusting and following those in leadership positions. In this world people question the veracity and reliability of those in authority and in many cases refuse to submit to them.

Nothing can be more damaging than to have Spiritual Leaders who are untrustworthy. What Leaders must understand is that they as well as believers can live godly and righteously in this present world, even though pressured both from within and from without. “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Galatians 5: 16). We must live by and through the power of the Holy Spirit. “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119: 9—11).

The Psalmist asked, how do we keep clean in a filthy environment? We can’t do this on our own, but must have counsel and strength more dynamic than the tempting influences around us. Where can we find that strength and wisdom? By reading God’s Word and doing what it says.

We must constantly be aware that the gospel of Jesus Christ sets us free from the penalty and power of sin. Our position in Christ declares us righteous



before God; perfect in His sight because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. “He paid for all of our sins—past, present and future.” There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ (Romans 8: 1) and we do not have to remain in bondage to sin (Romans 6).

### **[Guidelines For Moral Purity]**

#### **1. Moral purity is a requirement for church leaders.**

1 Timothy 3: 2, 12, and in Titus 1; 6, the apostle Paul urged that church leaders be the “husband of one wife.” While divorce may affect that standard, the primary emphasis is moral purity. The Greek says “a one-woman man.” The simple fact is that regardless of the temptation others may bring or the strong desire one may feel within for another person, the godly leader says no to leaving his spouse for another, and no to having sex with anyone other than his wife.

#### **2. Moral purity is the foundation of true Wisdom.**

We want our spiritual leaders to be wise people, and James 3: 17, reminds us that wisdom comes from God and is “first pure.” Once Godly purity is established, then the other traits of wisdom will be reflected in a person’s life. “When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan” (Proverbs 29: 2—3). For Infuse to be successful we must have leaders who manifest a godly life-style.

#### **3. Moral Purity is the Will of God.**

Notice these clear instructions for Moral Purity in 1 Thessalonians 4: 3—8. “It is God’s will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.”

This is a very clear assessment of the will of God. God has called us to holiness (1 Peter 1: 14—16). Our bodies have become temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians

6: 15—20), and we are not to defile them by sexual misconduct. Sexual desire is a precious gift of God (1 Corinthians 7: 7), and is to be fulfilled within the bond of marriage (1 Corinthians 7: 1—2). Those involved in sexual immorality are not doing the will of God in their lives. To be a Leader is to uphold moral purity.

#### **4. Moral Purity Glorifies God in a Person's Life.**

We will find a very strong admonition on moral purity in 1 Corinthians 6: 18—20. “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Sexual immorality is a sin that not only affects the emotional nature of humans, but also the physical body by sexual disease and impotency.

#### **5. Moral Purity is the key to great Leadership.**

In 2 Timothy 2: 19—22, the apostle Paul gave instructions to his son in the faith, Timothy, about his own spiritual leadership in God's church and the standards by which he would select other leaders. Paul wrote, “Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.” In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

Leaders must be vessels of honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, and prepared for every good work. Moral purity in the life of a spiritual leader is an essential part of integrity and trustworthiness. Our *reputation* is simply what people think we are, but our *character* is best seen in the dark when no one else knows what we are thinking, saying or doing.

It is then that we discover the meaning of personal integrity, not the kind that sees only the opinions of others, but the kind that senses deeply its accountability to God.

### **The Need For Faithfulness**

The *Leader* who can be trusted is the one who is faithful, not only in the issue of moral purity and fidelity, but also in every area of his life.

“So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (1 Corinthians 4: 2).

Tychicus is called “the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord” by the apostle Paul (Ephesians 6: 21). In Colossians 4: 7 he speaks of him again, saying, “our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord.” Epaphras is called “our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf” (Colossians 1: 7). Onesimus is said to be “our faithful and beloved brother” (Colossians 4: 9).

In 1 Timothy 1: 12, Paul referred to himself when he wrote: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service.” Again, he admonished us all on the basis of the coming resurrection, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15: 58).