

Tools for Wise Leadership

A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

Series 12: Self-Leadership

Talk 04: The Leader as a Role Model of Heart

Welcome to the programme **Tools for Wise Leadership**. In this series of programmes we are focusing on self-leadership. In order to lead others well you have to lead yourself well first. So what does this mean? Well at least three big realities: the heart, the head and the hands suitable for Christian leadership. In the last 3 programmes we have been focusing on the heart. We explored Romans 14:17-18 which says:

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

We also saw in the last programme the qualifications of church leaders based on 1 Tim 3. Most of them have to do with character and attitude more than they have to do with skills. In order to lead ourselves before leading others we must be able to say, like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” But what does following the example of Christ mean when we talk about developing the heart of a leader? This is our focus for today.

The extent to which you can regard yourself as a role model can be measured by the standards that Jesus Christ set. I have isolated 10 standards that Jesus set. Please have pen and paper ready for the following exercise. I will start discussing these 10 standards in half a minute. One good exercise for you is to give yourself a mark out of 10 for each standard so that for the ten of them you would have a percentage mark for yourself.

As you are getting pen and paper ready let me say that you need to be very honest in scoring yourself against these standards. You are not scoring this to impress anyone because only you and the Lord will know the scores. Rather this exercise is meant to be an indicator of your areas of strengths and your areas of weaknesses so as to give yourself an incentive to improve as a leader. So got your pen and paper ready? How many marks out of 10 would the Lord give you against each of the following standards of character as a leader as demonstrated by Jesus?

1. Jesus had a caring, shepherd heart. Jesus said he was the Good Shepherd who cared for the sheep in every way. Some leaders are like the bad Shepherds described in Ezekiel 34:1-4, *The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.’”*

What about you? Please give yourself a suitable mark out of 10 for a Shepherding caring heart.

2. Jesus was always humble. God resists the proud but gives his grace to the humble. God resisted King Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride. In Dan 4 as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, “Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?” The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven,

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“This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle.”

By contrast Jesus was humble. What about you? As a leader are you like the proud Nebuchadnezzar or the humble Jesus? Give yourself a mark out of 10.

3. Jesus associated with the lowly. This is an extension of Jesus’ humility that we have already talked about. What about you? Give yourself a mark out of 10 for your ability to associate with people at different levels of social status.
4. Jesus was a servant leader. In Matthew 20 Jesus said:
“You know that 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— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
Jesus demonstrated it by washing the feet of his disciples. What about you? Are you a servant leader? Give yourself a mark out of 10 for servant leadership
5. Jesus spent a lot of time in prayer. Jesus often withdrew to lonely places to pray. He even spent a whole night praying before selecting the apostles. Now if Jesus the Son of God needed to pray, what about you and me. Give yourself a mark out of 10 for your prayer life.
6. Jesus refused to yield to temptation. You know how Jesus was severely tempted at the beginning of his ministry. To satisfy the lust of the flesh he was tempted to change stone into bread. To satisfy the lust of the eyes he was shown the kingdoms of the world and told they would be his if he bowed down to Satan. To satisfy the pride of life he was tempted to fall down from the top of the temple so that in the full gaze of everybody he would be caught by the angels. He resisted all these temptations. What about you? Give yourself a mark out of 10 for the extent of resisting temptation.
7. Jesus forgave those who wronged him. Even as he unjustly suffered at the cross he prayed, “Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing.” What about you? Give yourself a mark out of 10 for your willingness to forgive those who wrong you.
8. Jesus had the courage to do what was right even though it might be unpopular. What about you? Do you play to the tune of those who surround you, or do you have the courage to do what is right even though it may be unpopular? Give yourself a mark out of 10.
9. Jesus spoke the truth in love. Some speak loveless truth intended to hurt their opponents. Others engage in truthless love which may be nothing but flattery. Not so with Jesus. He spoke the truth in love. What about you? Give yourself a mark out of 10 for speaking the truth in love.
10. Jesus always empowered his disciples instead of keeping all the knowledge and power to himself. Some leaders fear that their subordinates might become too powerful. Therefore they withhold knowledge and power from them in order to safeguard their own positions. By contrast Jesus gave away power, including power to heal and cast out demonic powers. What about you? Give yourself a mark out of 10 for your willingness to empower your subordinates.

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So there you are. Ten standards of character in a leader as demonstrated by Jesus. How close are you to those standard? Your total score would need to be 70% or above for you to be able to say with Paul, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

Now that you know these things, blessed are you if you put them into practice. Let's make a date for the next instalment of **tools of wise leadership**.

Discussion Questions for: Series 12 - Talk 04 - The Leader as a Role Model of Heart

For this series of *Self-Leadership* you can use the following study questions to guide you in deepening the impact of this series:

Study Question 1: for Personal reflection

What does this episode mean to you personally as a leader?

Study Question 2: for Group Discussion

What does this topic mean you as a group of leaders?

Study Question 3: for applying the topic

What can you apply from this topic in your role as a leader?

Summary:

Being a leader by following the standards set by Jesus means developing personal character and heart.

Discussion Questions:

Study Question 1: Personal reflection

Have I identified my areas of character strengths and weaknesses in order to improve my leadership style?

Study Question 2: Group Discussion

How do I measure up when I compare my standards with those exemplified by Jesus: Having a shepherd heart, being humble, associating with the lowly, serving, praying, refusing temptation, forgiving, doing what is right, speaking the truth in love, and empowering other?

Study Question 3: Applying the topic

By taking time to explore my own inner heart, what are my weaknesses that I should strive to improve?

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