

2014 Christian Leadership 3: Week 2 Introduction to Transformational Leadership

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The vital importance of high-quality spiritual leadership

If you take even a moment to reflect on the qualities of a leader that Gary touched on last week, we are reminded that Christian leadership (any ministry) is humanly impossible and requires God supernaturally working through us. No leader can convict the lost of their need for Christ, or a believer to repent and put God first in their life. We are unable impart the deep things of God in a life-changing way, nor can we oppose and defeat powerful evil spirits! These are acts that no human can hope to accomplish, no matter how intelligent and competent that person may be. Only He leads people to repentance and transforms them; only He changes hearts.

Yet, man has an essential role to play in the spiritual life of others and the home church. The most important human factor in healthy churches, home groups, and all ministries within the church is high-quality spiritual leadership. We can infer this from the large amount of biblical material devoted to spiritual leadership. This is part of the reason why Paul says 1 Tim. 3:1 (read).

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*.

I assume that you are in this class because you aspire to be a good spiritual leader. [I hope for most that leads to becoming a HC Leader; but ALL of us influence others spiritually – IE. lead people in one regard or another spiritually – relevant to all & especially to HCL]

But what is the essence of high-quality spiritual leadership? It is being a transformational leader.

It is *not* being transactional, autocratic, managerial, charismatic, or reactionary.

- “*Transactional*” means assessing what people want and taking your cues from them on what to do in any given circumstance, and giving it to them. While good leaders understand the importance of building consensus which always begins with understanding where people are coming from, they look to God and his Word for what people *actually* need and lead them into it (1 Thess. 2:4).

EG. Common problem in adult ministry especially. A leadership team wanting to get more people involved in discipleship [good!] and along lines of their plant plan [wise!]. But hadn’t laid out the plant plan to the people & didn’t want to use talk about it explicitly because a common reaction of people to plant talk is fear (“losing” friendships, change in general, etc.). Missing an opportunity to guide people to discover the real source of any inordinate fear & how to trust God to care for them.
- “*Autocratic*” means being strongly self-willed, Trying to bend people to do what you want them to do. Good leaders are willing to courageously call people to change, but they are humbly submitted to God and they call others to submit to God, not to them (1 Pet. 5:2,3 “shepherd the flock among you... not lording it over them.”). And their motive is God’s glory and the people’s good—not their own ego.
- “*Managerial*” means being adept at maintaining systems—scheduling teachings, meetings, events, etc. – but believing therefore that this is “leading”. Good leaders understand the importance of being organized, but they are primarily focused on drawing people into the life-transforming power of the gospel by sincerely loving them (1 Thess. 2:8).
- “*Charismatic*” means spiritually gifted to lead others (Rom. 12:8)—the God-given ability to attract, influence, and envision people even without spiritual maturity or integrity. Of course, this is a wonderful gift to have! And these traits are very important to be expressed in leaders. But without spiritual vitality and integrity, it is dangerous. ***And with spiritual vitality and integrity, we can lead people spiritually even if we are not charismatic*** [rpt]. (Note that this gift is not required for elders or deacons.)
- “*Reactionary*” means making most leadership decisions based on recent or serious crises that the home church, or some in it, are experiencing. Home churches are commonly confronted with pastoral issues, some quite serious, and some affecting a significant portion of the home church. But the issue is whether it

takes the leader's eye off the mission. Adjustments usually needed, but not to the exclusion of continuing to advance the gospel.

High quality leadership is being transformational. Transformational leaders intentionally attract others to God's transforming influence by communicating, incarnating and championing God's love and truth.

Let's spend a few minutes convincing ourselves of this.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is foundationally and intrinsically connected to the leader's own vital personal spirituality—being consistently filled with the Spirit (Acts 6:3,5). Paul has assigned Timothy the overwhelming task of correcting serious problems in the Ephesian church, that extended up into the eldership. Yet he exhorts Timothy that a key element for success will be his own spiritual progress (1 Tim. 4:15,16).

Our fruitfulness will also vary according to many factors (gifting; experience; opportunity; field; [other team-members we lead with] etc.), but we can **all** be fruitful (Jn. 15:5; Lk. 8:15)!

The *Leadership Principles from the Pastoral Epistles* class is laser-focused on becoming a transformational leader. If you haven't taken it, or it has been a while, it will likely be held in the Fall quarter via DVD watching at home & weekly facilitated discussions at main campus.

However, even our own spiritual transformation is not enough to lead a home church, nor even an individual we are discipling. Their observation of us will have its effects in terms of what Christ's love looks like and what a Great Commission lifestyle looks like. And it certainly provides us with a certain moral authority. But as we observe leaders in the Old & New Testaments motivating individuals, Israel, or churches to follow God, we see they also actively challenged the people to follow God in very specific ways. Moses modeled extraordinary trust in God but did far more to lead Israel. Paul spent well over a year in Ephesus, and yet his letters to them, and then to Timothy on behalf of the Ephesians, demonstrated that real hands-on leadership was needed to continue the sanctification of the people and further the mission of the church.

In Psalm 23, we can begin to see responsibilities beyond that of modeling. [turn to the paper: "Areas of Leadership Responsibility"].