



journal of biblical
perspectives
in leadership

LEADERSHIP FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST: DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP FROM 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7 AND TITUS 1:6-9: IDENTIFICATION AND EXPLANATION OF A SPIRITUAL LEADER'S PERSONAL PRIORITIES, FIDELITY OF AUTHORITY, AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

STEPHEN M. KING

The purpose of this article is to provide a conceptual framework for re-examining spiritual leadership. The article uses textual analysis, critically examining the meaning and consequences of Biblical leadership qualities or traits found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The conceptual framework developed consists of three factors relevant to the socialization of spiritual leadership: personal priorities, fidelity of authority, and community responsibility. Using the Pauline texts as the basis for analysis, drawing upon relevant leadership literature, and illustrating with Biblical vignettes of spiritual leaders, the article contends that spiritual leadership is: (1) based on the character of Jesus Christ; (2) that the Pauline discussion of leadership characteristics found in 1 Timothy and Titus form the basis for spiritual leadership conceptualization and empirical development; and (3) that spiritual leadership should not be considered only in the context of a church vocation or function, such as pastor or elder, but is representative in all other vocational and professional walks of life. In addition, the article argues that as spiritual leadership is absent of one or more of these factors—character, authority, and community—there arises a breach or crisis in spiritual leadership, which has devastating social and cultural consequences. Spiritual leadership is a key variable in the study and re-examination of Biblically-based and Biblically-inspired theories of leadership.

Leadership is a much discussed term. The number of books written on the subject over the last several decades is nearly countless. Business leaders, former corporate executives, academics, pundits, leadership gurus, business managers, sports heroes, coaches, pastors, theologians, and many more, have contributed to this bulging list of leadership information and knowledge. And as many different writers and types of writers that contribute to the subject, there are nearly as many different theses and purposes for trying to explain leadership.

Leadership in the business world is rightly concerned with vision,¹ human charisma, and motivation;² developing management expertise and strategy;³ and revealing theories, goals, and ideas regarding the expanse and importance of leadership.⁴ Even the Christian business world recognizes the need for setting precise business goals, being a strong manager, and implementing sound strategy.⁵

Leadership in the political world is certainly different from its business counterpart, but lately even the differences are blurring. The source and direction of presidential leadership is most often viewed as power,⁶ persuasion,⁷ or even emotion,⁸ where the president's ability to lead is marked by his ability to make decisions with lasting impact. The composite of a president's charisma, character, strength, courage, persuasion, and even circumstances under which he leads, all combine to identify "presidential differences."⁹ Political leaders, including presidents, enlist the aid of many advisors, but ultimately the leader and the leader alone is tasked with making decisions that impact many, oftentimes with consequences far into the future.

The purpose of this article is to provide a conceptual framework for re-examining spiritual leadership, using textual analysis of Biblical leadership qualities or traits found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The conceptual framework developed consists of three factors relevant to the socialization of spiritual leadership: *personal priorities*, *fidelity of authority*, and *community responsibility*. Using the Pauline texts as the basis

¹ Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge*, rev. ed. (New York: HarperBusiness, 1997).

² Jay A. Conger and Rabindra N. Kanungo, *Charismatic Leadership in Organizations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998); Max DePree, *Leadership Is an Art* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1989).

³ Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1973); Mikel Harry and Richard Schroeder, *Six Sigma: The Breakthrough Management Strategy Revolutionizing the World's Top Corporations* (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

⁴ Gary Hamel, *Leading the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2000); James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990).

⁵ Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, rev. ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press, 2010); John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007).

⁶ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1978).

⁷ Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York: The Free Press, 1990).

⁸ James David Barber, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985).

⁹ Fred I. Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Barack Obama*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

for analysis, drawing upon relevant leadership literature, and illustrating with Biblical models of spiritual leaders, the article contends that spiritual leadership is: (1) based on the character of Jesus Christ; (2) that the Pauline discussion of leadership characteristics found in 1 Timothy and Titus form the basis for spiritual leadership conceptualization and empirical development; and (3) that spiritual leadership should not be considered only in the context of a church vocation or function, such as pastor or elder, but is representative in all other vocational and professional walks of life. In addition, the article intuitively argues that if spiritual leadership is absent of one or more of these character, authority, and community factors, there arises a breach or crisis in spiritual leadership, which has devastating social and cultural consequences. Spiritual leadership is a key variable in the study and re-examination of Biblically-based and Biblically-inspired theories of leadership.

I. DEFINING SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

What constitutes spiritual leadership? Key Christian authors, such as John Stott,¹⁰ J. Oswald Sanders,¹¹ and Henry and Richard Blackaby,¹² generally agree that spiritual leadership is leadership modeled after the principles and practices of Jesus Christ, which is defined as *servant leadership*. Many others, including pastors,¹³ theologians,¹⁴ and leadership researchers,¹⁵ have all tried to explain some aspect of the spirituality of leadership, whether conceptually or empirically, including its impact on organizational transformation;¹⁶ influence on organizational and even “unit” performance;¹⁷ the appearance of Biblical “antecedents of successful leadership,” such

¹⁰ John Stott, *Basic Christian Leadership: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel, and Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

¹¹ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2007).

¹² Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda*, rev. ed. (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2011).

¹³ John MacArthur, *Called to Lead: 26 Leadership Lessons from the Life of the Apostle Paul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004).

¹⁴ Efrain Agosto, *Servant Leadership* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005); Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003).

¹⁵ Corne J. Bekker, “Towards a Theoretical Model of Christian Leadership,” *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 142-152; Eric B. Dent, M. Eileen Higgins, and Deborah M. Wharff, “Spirituality and Leadership: An Empirical Review of Definitions, Distinctions, and Embedded Assumptions,” *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16 (2005): 625-653; GT Freeman, “Spirituality and Servant Leadership: A Conceptual Model and Research Proposal,” *Emerging Leadership Journeys* 4, no. 1 (2011): 120-140; Louis W. Fry, “Toward a Theory of Spiritual Leadership,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 14, no. 6 (2003): 693-727. Roland G. Kuhl, “What is Pastoral Leadership? A Review of the Relevant Literature on Approaches and Understandings of Pastoral Leadership at the Beginning of the 21st Century” (unpublished manuscript, 2005): 1-117.

¹⁶ Margaret Benefiel, “The Second Half of the Journey: Spiritual Leadership for Organizational Transformation,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 16, no. 5 (October 2005): 723-747.

¹⁷ Louis W. Fry, Sean T. Hannah, Michael Noel, and Fred O. Walumbwa, “Impact of Spiritual Leadership on Unit Performance,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (April 2011): 259-270.

as morality and virtue;¹⁸ and the enduring “legacy of leadership” as evidence by the leadership wisdom of the Apostle Paul.¹⁹

Henry and Richard Blackaby note that “spiritual leadership is based on character and the working of the Holy Spirit.”²⁰ The recitation of both variables suggests that spiritual leadership is attained both through the internal and external merits of the leader himself (i.e., character) and through the manifest spiritual power and authority of the Holy Spirit. The former may lend itself to empirical verification; however, the latter is more amorphous and elusive.

J. Oswald Sanders, distinguished evangelical minister, described spiritual leaders (and thus, the resulting spiritual leadership):

Spiritual leaders are not elected, appointed, or created by synods or churchly assemblies. God alone makes them. One does not become a spiritual leader by merely filling an office, taking course work in the subject, or resolving in one’s own will to do this task. A person must qualify to be a spiritual leader.²¹

The qualification for spiritual leaders and leadership, then, is appointment by God. Following in the footsteps of Biblical leaders such as Abraham, Moses, Joseph, King David, and many others, spiritual leaders are marked by characteristics that do not emanate from who they are as a person, who they associate with it on a political or social basis, or what educational level they attained, but spiritual leaders are born of God’s spirit, marked by his character, and solidified in his image. John Stott, the influential British theologian, understood Christian or spiritual leadership equivalent with servant leadership.²² Citing Jesus’ intonation that true spiritual leaders do not command or direct, Stott emphasized that true spiritual leadership is rooted in the mentality and action to serve others (Mk 10:42-44).

Definition of Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership is not confined to typical Christian ministries, vocations, positions, or functions. Spiritual leadership is not limited to jurisdictional authority defined by church or denominational dictates. Spiritual leadership is defined by three components, which are factored from the qualities or traits of spiritual leadership derived from the Pauline texts under consideration: (1) the presence of personal priorities, which at their foundation is character; (2) fidelity of authority, which is the commitment to purpose; and (3) community responsibility, which is the extension of character and authority of the spiritual leader to the larger world or community outside of the spiritual leader’s vocation. Spiritual leadership, then, is reflective of human character, manifested

¹⁸ David A. Oginde, “Antecedents of Christian Leadership: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Timothy 3:1-7,” *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 3, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 23-31.

¹⁹ J. Lee Whittington, Tricia M. Pitts, Woody V. Kageler, and Vicki L. Goodwin, “The Leadership Wisdom of the Apostle Paul,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 16, no. 5 (October 2005): 749-770.

²⁰ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 150.

²¹ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 18-19.

²² Stott, *Basic Christian Leadership*, 11.

in jurisdictional authority, but not limited to one particular jurisdictional authority, and impactful of the outside world.

Character: The Key to Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership is based on the character of Jesus Christ. Character is first and foremost a Christian principle because it is fused to the person of Jesus Christ,²³ and it later leads to maturity, both as a person and a spiritual leader. The English word *character* derives from the Greek word *characakter*, meaning to make a mark or an indentation. The image of Caesar was imprinted on all coinage, denoting not only the divinity but longevity of Caesar himself. Later, character came to mean a “distinctive” and “lasting mark” made upon someone or caused by someone. Our love for our spouse, children, and parents, for example, is a “mark” or character that is imprinted not only in ourselves, but because of our love it also becomes part of the person we demonstrate our love toward. The Greeks developed this concept and understanding of character to describe what we understand today as *moral virtue*. For the Christian, though, the “Good” is God, and more specifically the knowledge and knowing of God through his son, Jesus Christ. The permanency of Christ translates into the permanency of character. And because of its permanency, it is indelibly etched into the recipient.

The evangelist D.L. Moody once noted, “Character is what you are in the dark.”²⁴ The spiritual leader is first and foremost imbued with character. And it is the character that is the foundation upon which he demonstrates the competence to make decisions.

II. EXPLAINING SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP THROUGH TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF BIBLICAL CHARACTER TRAITS

A spiritual leader is one who does not win his position by strength, intelligence, or influence. These characteristics are certainly important, but they are not the linchpin for describing spiritual leaders or the decision making that ensues from such leadership. Instead of examining various philosophical and theological understandings of spiritual leadership, we confine ourselves to the Pauline tradition, defined by the Bible and outlined in detail in two separate Biblical passages: 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

These two texts focus largely on the traits of spiritual leaders (i.e., leaders that occupy traditional Biblically-defined positions of authority and responsibility, such as bishops, deacons, elders, and pastors). As noted, this article expands the inclusion of spiritual leaders beyond these traditional church-defined positions to include leaders in various other cultural, institutional, and organizational leadership capacities. The Apostle Paul addressed his recent convert and young and devoted servant, Timothy, on the manner and behavior necessary for a spiritual leader to exemplify. Even though

²³ Richard J. Krejcir, “What is Character?” *Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership*, <http://www.churchleadership.org/apps/articles/?articleid=42500&columnid=&contentonly=true>.

²⁴ Attributed to Dwight L. Moody by his son, William R. Moody. See <http://quotationsbook.com/quote/6021/#sthash.Jkklwlpv.dpbs> for further explanation.

these traits are not exclusive, they do provide a spiritual benchmark expected of spiritual leaders.

Our two primary guiding questions are:

1. What are these Biblical characteristics of spiritual leadership? How are they factored?
2. Do these Biblical characteristics reflect the virtue and behavior that is expected of spiritual leaders only in the church? Or can these characteristics be useful in measuring the leadership dynamics, and thus resulting vacuum, of Christian leaders in vocations other than full-time ministry?

A corollary question is: What are the implications of a breach or crisis of spiritual leadership when these Biblical character traits are missing or diminished in some way?

The following Biblical passages describe spiritual characteristics that apply to various spiritual leaders, such as overseers and pastors (1 Tm 3:2-7), deacons (1 Tm 3:8-12), and elders (Ti 1:6-9). Several categorizations describe the arrangement of these spiritual characteristics. Table 1 is a general overview of these characteristics.

The characteristics listed in table 1 are wide-ranging, focusing on various aspects of a spiritual leader's life including: personal, professional, and family. Some characteristics appear in only one category: "respectable" and "able to teach" (overseers or pastors), while others appear at least twice ("not given to drunkenness" or "given to much wine"), or even three times ("husband of one wife" or "manager of his own children").

Some popular Christian authors, such as Gene Getz,²⁵ combine qualities or traits from all three scriptural passages, thus eliminating any redundancy or overlap, while providing a brief description of each characteristic or trait. Table 2 reflects this pared down version of the Pauline characteristics of spiritual leadership. Getz's primary purpose is to explain the characteristics as "attributes of a godly man," rather than focusing specifically on church leaders.

Several theologians and Bible scholars do type or factor the characteristics into various workable categorizations. In table 3, Ralph Wilson lists five categorizations, including "general reputation," "family stability and marriage and family," "basic character," "personal traits and habits," and "doctrinal fidelity."²⁶ He acknowledges that "general reputation," "basic character," and "personal traits and habits" collapse into one broad category labeled "character." Wilson crosses each trait category to each level or unit of church leadership, allowing the reader to distinguish between leadership and trait application. This reduces the number of categorizations to three.

²⁵ Gene A. Getz, (2004). *The Measure of a Man: Twenty Attributes of a Godly Man* (Ventura, CA: Regal Publishing, 2004), 20-21.

²⁶ Ralph Wilson, "Selecting Leaders in God's Household (1 Timothy 3:1-16; Titus 1:6-9)," *Jesus Walk Bible Study*, <http://www.jesuswalk.com/books/timothy.htm>.

Table 1. Biblical characteristics of spiritual leadership located in 1 Timothy 3:2-12 and Titus 1:6-9

| Overseers (1 Tm 3:2-7) | Deacons (1 Tm 3:8-12) | Elders (Tt 1:6-9) |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Above reproach | 15. Men worthy of respect | 23. Blameless |
| 2. Husband of one wife | 16. Sincere | 24. Husband of but one wife |
| 3. Temperate | 17. Not indulging in much wine | 25. Man whose children are believers and not wild and disobedient |
| 4. Self-controlled | 18. Not pursuing dishonest gain | 26. Not overbearing |
| 5. Respectable | 19. Keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with clear conscience | 27. Not quick-tempered |
| 6. Hospitable | 20. Must first be tested | 28. Not given to drunkenness |
| 7. Able to teach | 21. Husband of one wife | 29. Not violent |
| 8. Not given to drunkenness | 22. Must manage his children and his household well | 30. Not pursuing dishonest gain |
| 8. Not given to drunkenness | | 31. Hospitable |
| 9. Not violent but gentle | | 32. Loves what is good |
| 10. Not quarrelsome | | 33. Self-controlled |
| 11. Not a lover of money | | 34. Upright |
| 12. Manage his own family; see that his children obey him with proper respect | | 35. Holy |
| 13. Not a recent convert | | 36. Disciplined |
| 14. Good reputation with outsiders | | 37. Hold firmly to Word of God—to (a) encourage others by sound doctrine, and (b) refute those who oppose it |

Table 2. Pauline characteristics of Biblical or spiritual characteristics in Timothy and Titus²⁷

| Pauline characteristic |
|---|
| 1. Overall spiritual maturity (well-rounded man, Renaissance man) |
| 2. Above reproach (person of good reputation outside the church) |
| 3. Husband of one wife (fidelity; morally pure) |
| 4. Temperate (balanced in words and deeds) |
| 5. Prudent (wise and humble) |
| 6. Respectable (being a good role model for others) |
| 7. Hospitable (not selfish, but generous) |
| 8. Able to teach (able to communicate clearly and sensitively) |
| 9. Not given to drunkenness (not addicted to a controlling substance that would impair judgment) |
| 10. Not self-willed (not self-centered and controlling) |
| 11. Not quick tempered (not violent or excessively angry) |
| 12. Not abusive |
| 13. Gentle (sensitive, loving, and kind) |
| 14. Peaceable (not argumentative or divisive) |
| 15. Not a lover of money (not materialistic) |
| 16. Manage his own family; see that his children obey him with proper respect (good husband and father; good steward) |
| 17. Loves what is good (pursues godly activities) |
| 18. Just (wise, discerning, nonprejudiced, and fair with others) |
| 19. Devout (is holy, devoted to God) |
| 20. Self-controlled (disciplined personally, professionally, socially) |

Further clarification of the categorizations of spiritual leadership traits include Ray Pritchard's²⁸ framework, which is divided in categories titled "personal," "public," "family," and "ministry." One of the utilities of Pritchard's framework is the explicit delineation of various characteristics applicable in contexts outside of the local church. It is Pritchard's contention that spiritual leaders are not just leaders within and to their congregation of Christian believers, but that they are accountable for leadership responsibilities to the greater public, including "being above reproach," "hospitable," and of "good reputation" (see table 4).

²⁷ Table 2 is adapted from Getz, *The Measure of a Man*.

²⁸ Ray Pritchard, "The Biblical Concept of Elder," *Bibliotheca Sacra* (January-March 1987): 73-74.

Table 3. Grouping of Pauline leadership traits found in 1 Timothy 3:2-12 and Titus 1:6-9²⁹

| | General reputation | Family stability/marriage and family | Basic character | Personal traits and habits | Doctrinal fidelity |
|-----------|---|---|--|--|---|
| Overseers | "Respectable" (i.e., "of good behavior"), "Good reputation with outsiders" ("good report" or "well thought of") | "Husband of but one wife" (Paul meant leaders are not to be "unfaithful within the marriage"), "Manage his own family well, children obey with proper respect" ("Manage, meaning rule in a caring, servant-like way"), "Hospitable" | "Above reproach" ("not open to censure, irreproachable"), "Not a recent convert" | "Temperate," ("vigilant," "restrained in conduct, level-headed"), "Self-controlled," "Not given to drunkenness," "Not violent but gentle," "Not quarrelsome," "Not a lover of money" | "Able to teach" |
| Elders | | "Husband of but one wife," "Children are believers and not wild or disobedient," "Hospitable" | "Blameless," One who loves what is good," "Upright," "Holy" | "Disciplined," "Not indulging in much wine," "Not violent," "Not quick-tempered," "Not overbearing," "Not pursuing dishonest gain" | "Hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught," "Encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" |
| Deacons | "Worthy of respect," ("serious," "dignified," "grave") | "Husband of but one wife," "Manage his children and household well" | "Nothing against them," "Trustworthy in everything" ("trustworthy in everything," "faithful in all things"), "Tested first" ("proved," "make a critical examination of; to determine genuineness, put to the text, examine") | "Temperate," "Not malicious talkers," "Sincere," "Not given to drunkenness," "Not pursuing dishonest gain" | "Hold the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience" |

²⁹ Table 3 is adapted from Wilson, "Selecting Leaders."

Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 5, no. 1 (2013), 3-40.

© 2013 School of Business & Leadership, Regent University

ISSN 1941-4692

Table 4. Categorization of Pauline leadership traits along four dimensions³⁰

| Personal | Public | Family | Ministry |
|--|---|--|---|
| Temperate: even-tempered, not erratic or unstable | Above reproach: no questionable conduct, no grounds for accusations | Husband of one wife: "one woman man," faithful to wife, fidelity | Able to teach: knows and communicates Biblical truth |
| Prudent: showing good judgment and common sense | Hospitable: receptive and open to people | Manages own household well: leader at home, especially spiritual | Holding fast the word of truth: firm in truth, not a compromiser |
| Not addicted to wine | Good reputation with outsiders: admired by non-Christians | Children under control: children who respect him | Exhort with sound doctrine: encourages others with Biblical truth |
| Not pugnacious: does not lose temper; not violent | | Children who are Christian believers | Refute those who contradict: spots and refute false teaching |
| Gentle: patient and considerate | | | |
| (Un)contentious: peaceful; willing to listen, not argumentative | | | |
| Free from love of money: not greedy for personal gain | | | |
| Not self-willed: willing to yield to others; not trying to get own way, servant leader | | | |
| Not a novice: evidence of spiritual maturity | | | |
| Not quick tempered: not easily angered | | | |
| Loving what is good: adhere to highest moral and ethical values | | | |
| Just: fair and honest | | | |
| Devout: devoted to God in his personal life | | | |
| Self-controlled: control himself under pressure | | | |

³⁰ Table 4 is adapted from Wilson, "The Biblical Concept of an Elder."

Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership 5, no. 1 (2013), 3-40.

© 2013 School of Business & Leadership, Regent University

ISSN 1941-4692

Lastly, Stephen M. King³¹ develops yet another conceptual framework, loading the leadership traits or characteristics onto three factors: personal priorities, fidelity of authority, and community or public responsibility. Similar to Pritchard's conceptualization, King's categorization focuses (1) upon both internal and external direction of a spiritual leader's focus, but (2) unlike Pritchard and others, it forges a relationship between character and virtue traits or personal priorities, commitment or fidelity of God-ordained authority, and community or public responsibility to those followers, organizations, and institutions that the spiritual leader influences, particularly outside his own vocational environ. King's categorization and resulting factor loads are derived from 1 Timothy 3:2-9 and Titus 1:6-9. He identifies a total of twenty-two character or spiritual leadership traits (see table 5).

Table 5. Identification of spiritual leadership traits loaded on three factors: personal priorities, fidelity of authority, and community responsibility³²

| Personal priorities | Fidelity of authority | Community responsibility |
|---|--|---|
| Basic character: blameless and holy | Husband of one wife (demonstrates moral behavior) | Good report of those without (being a good witness) |
| Strength and stability: vigilant, sober, temperate, and of good behavior | One that rules his own house | Being just |
| Personal moderation: not given to wine, no striker, not a brawler, not soon angry, not covetous, not a lover of money | Not a novice | Given to hospitality |
| Spiritual maturity: holding fast to Word of God, being apt to teach | Not self-willed (obedient and respectful of authority) | Lover of good men (loves what is moral and ethical) |

King argues that the first of three spiritual leadership factors is rooted squarely in character formation and development. They are labeled personal priorities. These qualities are the primary ingredients of spiritual leadership; the necessary characteristics that every Christian leader, particularly those in pulpit ministries, but inclusive of all spiritual leaders regardless of vocation or calling, must exemplify, believe

³¹ Stephen M. King, "The Qualities of Biblical Christian Leadership" (Christian leadership teaching series, New Life Assembly of God, Lakeland, FL, January 12, 2011-March 30, 2011).

³² Table 5 is adapted from King, "The Qualities of Biblical Christian Leadership."

in, and demonstrate. These qualities or characteristics reflect the leader's inner person, arguing that a spiritual leader must control his carnal nature, his lustful desires, his temper, his patience, his self-control, etc. Without doing so, no spiritual leader can effectively be put in a position to lead. If he cannot control and govern himself, he has no business trying to govern and lead others. These ten qualities or traits are further divided into four subcategories:

1. Basic character (blameless and holy)
2. Inner strength and stability (vigilant, good behavior, temperate, and sober)
3. Personal moderation (too much wine, don't be angry, and don't be greedy)
4. Spiritual maturity (given to teach)

The second set of factors is referred to as fidelity to authority. These four qualities represent faithfulness to one's responsibilities, either directly or indirectly related to the spiritual leader's vocation. A spiritual leader is committed to not only his job, but to fulfilling the duties of that job with excellence. Perfection in this world is not attainable; however, commitment of service, devotion to detail, and sincerity of heart is attainable. Just as a husband and wife should reflect fidelity of heart, so should a spiritual leader demonstrate fidelity of concern for both the job and the people affected. These qualities include:

- Not being self-willed
- Husband of one wife
- One that rules his own house
- Not a novice

The third set of factors for spiritual leadership is community responsibility, specifically denoting the spiritual leader's relationship and influence of and to those organizations, both civil and private, constituent groups, nonprofit programs, or other para-church ministries among others, which form the larger community. God expects spiritual leaders to control and govern themselves not only within the confines of their vocation, but also to the broader community. These two qualities include:

- Good report of those without
- Given to hospitality

We live in difficult and challenging times. These times require strength and purpose of character, particularly within spiritual leaders. Spiritual leaders must develop and exhibit quality of character first as a person, second for the fidelity of their authority, and third for the larger community as a whole. The remainder of this article critically assesses and examines sixteen of the twenty-two Biblical qualities or traits of spiritual leadership identified by King,³³ addresses the probability of a breach or crisis in spiritual leadership, and finally offers concluding remarks.

III. PERSONAL PRIORITIES: THE CORE OF A SPIRITUAL LEADER

³³ King, "The Qualities of Biblical Christian Leadership."

The core of a spiritual leader is his character. Character is what marks a person's soul and influences his action and behavior. Character motivated by or impressed of Biblical virtues is the cornerstone for a spiritual leader. Like the foundation of a house, the foundation of a person (i.e., his character) upholds and strengthens who he is as a person.

Character: The Basic Priority of Spiritual Leaders

The first of the personal priorities is the basic character of spiritual leaders, which includes being *blameless* or *above reproach* and to be *holy*. Let's examine each quality or trait and then illustrate, using Job and John the Baptist as Biblical examples.

Blameless. The first of Paul's traits related to personal character or virtue is "to be blameless and holy." Some translations read "above reproach," which means "something that cannot be taken hold of." First, before we examine this trait or characteristic, it is necessary that a spiritual leader be a confessional Christian. It is imperative that a spiritual leader, who is entrusted with the lives and souls of others under his care or watch, be a Biblical Christian, one who receives through his spiritual transformation at the time of confession, or as evangelicals note, at the time of his "new birth," the divine nature of Jesus Christ. He is a "new creature in Christ Jesus" (2 Cor 5:17a).³⁴

A blameless spiritual leader, or one who is above reproach, is not a perfect leader—one who is without sin, or who commits no wrong. Man's sin nature precludes this from happening. To be blameless means that the leader, as evidenced by his actions, behavior, and, most importantly, decision making—not necessarily decisions made—cannot be censured or cannot be called to account for a wrong action or behavior. He cannot be rebuked or found fault with. A spiritual leader's core conviction, his inner nature, is of such noteworthiness that nothing he says or does will produce a blot or blemish on either his reputation or character. More importantly, as Kenneth Wuest writes, "a spiritual leader (or 'bishop') must be of such spotless character that no one can lay hold anything in his life which would be of such nature to cast reproach upon the cause of Christ."³⁵ It is often noted that Billy Graham, when traveling alone, would not allow himself to be placed in a potentially compromising position, such as riding in an elevator alone with a female stranger. This is clearly a spiritual leader carrying himself in such a way that his character and, thus, reputation are beyond criticism.

Bear in mind, blameless does not mean or imply sinless, as we have mentioned. Only one was sinless: Jesus Christ. But according to others, such as J. Rodman Williams, "it does mean solid in character so that reproach or censure cannot be

³⁴ All scripture references are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

³⁵ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies from the Greek New Testament for the English Reader*, vol. 2, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. Eerdmans Publishing, 1973), 52-53.

brought against him.”³⁶ He should not engage in illegal or illicit activities—obviously! But he should not even be associated with such activities; he should avoid “the very appearance of evil.”³⁷

Holy. In Titus 1:8, Paul commands that a spiritual leader also be holy. The Greek word *hosios* translates “right” by “intrinsic or divine character.”³⁸ This is powerful because it implies that a spiritual leader’s character or inner nature is infused with the divine nature of God. We as Christians at the “new birth” have imparted into us the nature of God himself. We do not become “gods,” of course, but beyond *imago dei*, when we confess and believe that Christ is our Lord and savior, we become “new creatures,” discarding the “old man” or our old ways and embracing the “new man” or the new nature which is found in God himself (2 Cor 5:17). Thus, by being holy, a spiritual leader is to display holiness, or the actions of being holy.

The call to be holy is found in both the Old and New Testaments. In Leviticus, God speaks through his prophet that “you shall be holy; for I am holy.”³⁹ Hebrews declares, “For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled.”⁴⁰ And Peter writes, “But as he which has called you is holy, so be ye holy.”⁴¹ The power of godly holiness is present in every believer. God commands all Christians to be holy, but it is specifically applicable to his spiritual leaders. Let’s examine our first of two Biblical spiritual leaders: Job.

Job: The calm and careful spiritual leader. Job was a worthy man; a man of note and eminency; he even held the position of magistrate. In all of his private and public dealings, he was perfect and upright, concerned with both his character and his reputation. The first line of Job reads: “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”⁴² The key is that he “feared God.” When the fear of God reigns in the heart of a spiritual leader, his character and actions are governed entirely by the reverence granted to God himself. Matthew Henry wrote about Job:

The fear of God made him perfect and upright, inward and entire for God, universal and uniform in religion.... He feared God, had a reverence for his majesty, a regard to his authority, and a dread of his wrath. He dreaded even the thought of doing what was wrong; with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, and with a constant care and watchfulness...he avoided all appearances of sin and evil.⁴³

³⁶ J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: The Church, the Kingdom, the Last Things* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 204.

³⁷ 1 Thes 5:22.

³⁸ BibleSuite.com, s.v. “hosios,” <http://biblesuite.com/greek/3741.htm>.

³⁹ Lv 11:44-45.

⁴⁰ Heb 7:26.

⁴¹ 1 Pt 1:15.

⁴² Jb 1:1.

⁴³ Henry, “Job 1” in *Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible*, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/job/1.html>.

Job did not consider his earthly station or relish in his wealth and position; but he did love his family, his life, and his God. As a spiritual leader in his community, he embodied the spirit of service and worship. He did not despise what God provided for him in terms of possessions, yet he did not excuse them either.

Throughout his long and arduous physical, emotional, and spiritual challenge, where he combated the torment of Satan, endured the lack of support from his wife, and was regaled by the ungodly and frivolous advice from his companions, Job remained vigilant and faithful. Certainly he questioned his position, and why what was happening to him was happening, but because of his virtue and character, Job did not waver or did not consider abandoning his God. He feared God too much; the reverence for God's glory and majesty was too great that he could not conceive of disappointing his lord.

Job's trials demarcate the strength of inner character; he displayed what it means to be blameless and walk holy before God and man. Our second Biblical spiritual leader, John the Baptist, is a far different type of leader. John was led into the desert at a young age, subsisting on very little of natural necessities. He carefully listened to the voice of God, emerged from the desert region, developed his own band of disciples, and eventually sounded the clarion call for the coming Messiah.

Certainly it is true of spiritual leaders that they possess the calling from the Lord—the command from God himself to lead in a particular area and way—but it is imperative that before this command can be fulfilled, the spiritual leader must exhibit the Pauline qualities necessary to carry out the divine call. No spiritual leader can lead in the church, business, education, family, government, or in any other jurisdictional area unless and until he walks worthy of the call.

John the Baptist: The combative and prophetic spiritual leader. Compared to Job, John the Baptist was spiritually pugilistic; yet, beneath the rough exterior was a man who dedicated his life to austerity and holiness. Prophets are usually not considered spiritual leaders, but in fact they exhibit more leadership acumen than many Christians who reside in spiritual leadership posts, regardless of vocation. Abraham Heschel wrote, "The prophet was an individual who said 'No' to his society, condemning its habits and assumptions, its complacency, waywardness, and syncretism."⁴⁴ As a result, the prophet led (leads) those who wish to follow. He does not usually lead out of a traditional vocational or professional position (but he may). He leads from his heart; he leads by his proclamation of truth, truth that is sown deep in his character, a character that is burned in the lava of holiness, a complete commitment to God, where he hears the voice of God in the same way we hear the roar of a waterfall cascading downward. Heschel writes, "God is raging in the prophet's words,"⁴⁵ and the people risk their own life if they ignore the prophet's words.

John the Baptist was such a spiritual leader. His holy lifestyle was forged on the backside of the desert, "preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of

⁴⁴ Abraham, Heschel, *The Prophets: An Introduction*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), xv.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

sins.”⁴⁶ Isaiah proclaimed the forthcoming of John the Baptist: “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’”⁴⁷ John’s purpose was simple, but profound: usher in the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Only a man baptized in tears, consecrated among the rocks, hills, and animals of the nether regions of the Judean wilderness, who kept himself “pure and undefiled” from all worldly excesses. His purpose was certain, and his calling without question—only this kind of spiritual leader can proclaim loudly and without reservation that the Messiah was coming.

Beyond his messianic calling, John, operating as a spiritual leader, birthed in the baptism of fire of holiness, confronted the abuses of religion and society. First, while at the same time he encouraged and provoked the common people, the publicans, and soldiers to good works and repentance (Lk 3: 10-14), he excoriated the religious zealots and synagogue leaders—the Pharisees and Sadducees—for substituting their holy rituals and self-righteousness for the unconditional love and mercy of Jesus Christ. At John’s baptismal services, for example, he scoffed at them: “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come” (Mt 3:7). John spoke the truth in a way and manner that did not endear him to the religious establishment; he not only challenged their lifestyle and hypocrisy, but he thrashed unmercifully at the shallowness of their religious thought and pedigree, when he proclaimed, “And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees” (Mt 3:10a). John spoke the truth, a truth that only he could speak, because it was a truth born out of his untarnished character, a character that glistened in godliness and consecration.

Second, he spoke against Herod the tetrarch because of his sexual immorality: having sex with his brother’s wife (Mt 14:3; Mk 6:17). Herod was the epitome of a weak leader: he could not think for himself, he constantly groveled at the feet of those who would do his bidding; he could not stand up for what was right and honorable. But Herod did recognize the strength of John’s spiritual leadership: inner character, marked by holiness. Herod “feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly” (Mk 6:20). He confronted Herod, warning him that his own leadership position would suffer if he continued in his immoral lifestyle. Herod responded, of course, by beheading John.

A spiritual leader’s basic character traits are to be blameless and holy. He is to be above reproach, not giving his detractors the opportunity to appoint blame, from unethical indiscretions to immoral or even illegal actions. The Biblical examples of Job and John demonstrate that spiritual leaders do not necessarily need to reside in common vocational positions of authority to hold and be recognized by others to operate as a spiritual leader. Second, their callings and personalities will influence their purpose, while still requiring their inner core to be virtuous.

⁴⁶ Lk 3:3.

⁴⁷ Is 40:3.

Strength and Stability

The second set of personal priorities is strength and stability, including the qualities: “vigilant, sober, temperate, and (of) good behavior” (1 Tm 3:2; Ti 1:7, 8). A spiritual leader’s virtuous character is displayed in his actions and demeanor toward others. Operationally, spiritual leaders are challenged to fulfill or demonstrate their inner virtues. While monks in monasteries portray blameless and holy lifestyles too, their cloistered lifestyle negates their involvement with the world around them. Spiritual leaders do not have this luxury; instead, they are to interact, to communicate, and to live by example their blameless and holy lifestyle. Stating it is one thing; living it is something entirely different. Let’s define and describe each quality, and then we will illustrate the strength and stability factor through the Biblical lives and work of the Apostles Peter and Paul. First, let’s define each term.

Vigilant. The Greek rendering for vigilant is *nephalion*, which means “to be calm, dispassionate, and circumspect.”⁴⁸ A spiritual leader must be certain of what transpires around him; he needs to be cognizant of his social surroundings, and use wise caution when speaking or acting.

Good behavior. Good behavior (Greek: *kosmios*) means “orderly,” even “dignified.”⁴⁹ Spiritual leaders are to display an attitude toward others that is stable, meaning focused, and sincere.

Temperate and sober. Temperate (Greek: *egkrates*) and sober (Greek: *sophron*) are similar enough that we will treat them as one. To be temperate is to be “strong, masterful, and self-controlled,” while being sober also means to be “self-controlled,” while displaying seriousness of purpose.⁵⁰ A temperate and sober spiritual leader should be “careful, controlled, and earnest” in displaying good behavior toward others.

The spiritual leader’s vigilance: The Apostle Peter. Peter demonstrates and explains the behavioral qualities of vigilance and good behavior in this passage. Notice in verse 2, he argues that the spiritual leader assumes leadership not in a demanding or compulsorily fashion, but with the followers’ consent (i.e., willingly or voluntarily). The spiritual leader is to exercise sobriety and circumspectness in his actions and behavior, meaning he is to be careful and diligent in the words he chooses and the actions he engages in. He is to always discharge his leadership duties with care, doing so because he desires to, not because he is forced to.

Certainly spiritual leaders face unenviable dilemmas, sometimes life and death. Regardless of the outcome, or perceived outcome, of a spiritual leader’s decision, he is not to be forced or compelled into making the decision hastily or without contemplation; he is to make the decision because he knows it is the right thing to do (i.e., make the decision, not to try and control the outcome of the decision). In order to accomplish this,

⁴⁸ *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, vol. 4, by W. E. Vine (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981), s.v. “vigilant.”

⁴⁹ *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*, vol. 1, s.v. “good behavior.”

⁵⁰ *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*, vol. 4, s.vv. “temperate,” “sober.”

Peter argues he can do this because of his authority and commitment to the greater good. He is not simply doing it because it represents another task to be performed—a job to do—but he is performing the task, making the decision, and functioning as a sober and circumspect leader, despite the challenges and difficulties.

Besides reaching a decision outcome, what benefit comes from the spiritual leader being vigilant and of good behavior? The spiritual leader, whether in the pulpit or the boardroom, must be prepared for the spiritual attacks from the enemy. First Peter 5:8 admonishes the Christian leader to be prepared “because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Further, the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 6:11 and 13 to “put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” The spiritual leader must take care that his followers’ professional and perhaps personal needs are met and cared for. Spiritual leaders should demonstrate care and concern by being watchful, sensing the impact of change not only spiritually, but economically to socially as well, and by being prepared to address the needs of followers. A Biblical exemplar of temperance and sobriety of character throughout the practice of spiritual leaders is Paul himself.

The temperate and sober spiritual leader: Apostle Paul. First Corinthians 9:24-27 is Paul’s account, perhaps even defense, of not only his ministry but the actions he took while fulfilling his ministry calling.

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Paul not only defended his apostolic character, but demonstrated the self-denial he endured and continued to endure, not only as an example of true spiritual leadership, but for the furtherance of the gospel of Christ. Let’s look at a simple illustration: the Isthmian Games and pursuit for the “crown of life.”

The Isthmian Games, organized circa 581 B.C., were played every two years in Corinth in honor of the sea gods Palaemon and Poseidon. The contests were athletic, and were similar to the Olympic Games, but on a smaller scale. Although drinking, dancing, and general frivolity were part of the event, the main prize that all contestants strove for was the victor’s crown, a “crown of wild celery.” This illustration depicts the hard work, dedicated effort, strength, and self-control exercised by the spiritual leader that is needed to win. Paul is our example. Look again at verses 26 and 27:

I therefore so run; not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Paul was not an athlete competing for the winner’s prize: the crown of celery. But he was striving to be the spiritual leader that God commanded him to be on that dusty road to Damascus many years before. Paul was not trying to be perfect in outcome, but to be excellent in behavior. He ran his spiritual leadership race the same way that the

Isthmian athletes prepared to compete: with conviction and purpose. Paul sought to control his body and mind, keeping both under subjection, not allowing either to wander. Paul had a holy fear of himself, meaning that he took nothing for granted in his role as apostle, chief spiritual leader. Paul so demanded of himself temperance and self-control of character that he would not do anything that might detour himself or those he led from fulfilling their calling and achieving the cause of Christ.

Do spiritual leaders today truly live lives reflective of the commitment Paul exemplified? Do they live lives that are under control, disciplined, and sanctimonious to their calling and purpose? Do they in turn demonstrate this seriousness to the people they are commanded to lead? We live in a world that is filled with temptations, but so did Paul. We work in a world that weighs heavily upon us, but so did Paul. It is not that the temptations and weight of sin is not there, it is how spiritual leaders prepare themselves to face these challenges.

Personal Moderation

The third category of personal priorities is personal moderation. This factor is framed by five negative or non-qualities, which can be grouped under three headings: being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, not being angry or contentious, and not being greedy of filthy lucre.

Too much wine. Although drinking wine (Greek: *oinos*) was not forbidden during the first-century church, Paul abstained, primarily so as not to be a stumbling block for new Christians in Rome (Rom 14:21). Because wine was a common drink during the first century, it shows up in many places throughout the scriptures, including being the centerpiece of Jesus' first miracle at Cana (Jn 2:9). Further, it is used for medicinal purposes in the story of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:34) and advocated as such by Paul to Timothy (1 Tm 5:23). Spiritually, it is one of the primary symbols of the Holy Spirit (Mt 9:17; Mk 2:22). Clearly, the scriptures do not paint wine as evil or totally forbidden. Rather, Paul's admonition about consuming too much and, thus, becoming drunk, reflects his concern to Timothy about how the human personality is altered, character tainted, and behavior becoming unseemly after too much alcohol is consumed.

The Greek word in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 for the phrase "not given to wine" is *paroinos*, which simply meant a person was drinking too much wine. The direct effect, of course, of tarrying too long at the wine or consuming too much, is that it may, and usually does, lead to behavior alteration that will cause harm to the character and reputation of the spiritual leader. Paul warns in Ephesians, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit,"⁵¹ meaning that the Christian leader must be moderate in his consumption of alcohol (i.e., wine), and, if necessary, even abstain completely. We should drink to excess the wine of the Holy Spirit, but we should not indulge in like manner with the fruit of the vine!

⁵¹ Eph 5:18.

Don't be angry! Paul strongly emphasizes that in addition to refraining from consuming too much alcohol, the spiritual leader should abstain from blatant, raw, emotional-based actions or reactions, such as getting angry (not soon angry), not fighting (no brawler), or lashing out at others in anger (no striker). (It is not stated in the Biblical text, but one could infer that there is cause-and-effect relationship between over-consumption of alcohol and the resulting negative behavioral and emotional responses.)

These emotional responses are raw and natural (Greek: *orge*, where we get the term “orgy”). They are raw because they explode out of the person, initiated by some reaction to an external or even internal event or substance. But they are natural, too, because they are part of man’s makeup as a fallen creature. They are present in man and the spiritual leader—I don’t think Paul denies this—but he does deny the excuse of the spiritual leader that he cannot or will not control or moderate these actions. This in Paul’s estimation is inexcusable on the part of the spiritual leader. His responsibility and accountability is too great to be excused. Righteous or “godly anger” is replete throughout the Old and New Testaments (Heb 3:11; Mk 3:4, 5; Jn 3:36; 1 Thes 2:16), but unchecked emotion, anger, and especially physical action is completely unacceptable. Even Jesus was “righteously indignant” when the moneychangers set up shop in the temple courtyard (Jn 2:14-16), but his provocation and agitation was warranted based on the gravity of the situation: the desecration of the temple and its purpose.

Don't be greedy. Perhaps one of the greatest human temptations is to seek after or lust an ample supply of wealth. Spiritual leaders are just as susceptible as anyone, Christian or not. Money and its exchange is a necessary part of any organization—private, public, or nonprofit, including Christian ministry. No matter how spiritually centered or motivated the Christian leader’s focus, plan, and purpose is, the fulfillment of it requires resources, including financial. Paul understood this (2 Cor 9:6-11), but he also understood that spiritual leaders and their respective organizations and human resources are not to be greedy and lax in their handling of money, but are to be careful and not covetous. Let’s examine 2 Corinthians 9:6-11:

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work; (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness) Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

Money itself is but a means, a conveyance, of distributing and redistributing material goods. It is means to an end; in other words, it is deontological—it has a designated purpose. For Paul, though, the purpose is not to increase the bank account

of the spiritual leader. Spiritual leaders are not to use money to advance their personal station in life. They certainly are to draw wages or salary (Dt 5:24; 1 Tm 5:16-17), but they are not to achieve or even seek after unjust gain; they are not to be “greedy of filthy lucre” (1 Tm 3:3; Ti 1:7; 1 Pt 5:2). Pursuit of financial accumulation of wealth—wealth for wealth’s sake—is for Paul to embrace worldliness (1 Tm 6:6-10). Paul is emphatic with Timothy: money itself is not the problem; “the love of money” is the problem (v. 10).

Matthew 6:19-21 reads: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.” Clearly a spiritual leader’s contentment or satisfaction is not found in this world; these material things we have and accumulate and exchange for other things of greater value must not lay hold on our hearts in a way than does the person and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul is stressing that spiritual leaders must equate the natural and material needs of this present world with the satisfaction and glory of the world yet to be. This balance requires that spiritual leaders be good stewards (e.g., Joseph and the distribution of grain in Genesis 39-41 and the apostles and distribution of goods for widows and orphans in 1 Peter 5) of the material goods, particularly as it relates to the furtherance of the organization’s goals and purpose.

Pursuit of personal moderation is a third category or factor that undergirds a spiritual leader’s personal character or virtue. The scripture is clear—or at least Paul is clear—as to how and why the spiritual leader is to exhibit or manifest the strength and stability of character through self-control and personal resistance of vices or even the inordinate accumulation and hoarding of financial resources in order to maintain and present a picture of control and moderation in action. This reflects the spiritual leader’s primary goal, which is to be a service to others rather than propagating self-service.

Spiritual Maturity

The fourth and final subcategory under personal priorities is spiritual maturity. A spiritual leader is one who is devoted to the spiritual growth and well-being of his followers. Scholarly attention is granted in both the public and private work sectors to promote the spirituality of workers, both from a Christian and non-Christian perspective.⁵² Spiritual leaders themselves, therefore, must be able to communicate to workers spiritual truths of moral value and ethical conduct.⁵³ For Paul, who was referring

⁵² Jean Claude Garcia-Zamor, “Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance,” *Public Administration Review* 63, no. 3 (May-June 2003): 355-363; Robert A. Giacalone and Carole L. Jurkiewicz, eds., *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

⁵³ Stephen M. King, “The Moral Manager: Vignettes of Virtue from Virginia,” *Public Integrity* 8, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 113-133; Stephen M. King, “A Proverbial Approach to Public Administration,” *Public Voices* 7, no. 2 (2004): 28-40; Stephen M. King, “Toward a New Administrative Ethic: An Understanding and Application of the Judea-Christian Tradition to Administrative Issues,” *Public Integrity* (Winter 2000): 17-27.

to pastors or overseers and elders, the convictions and manifestations of spiritual maturity are borne out in understanding and applying the Word of God through teaching (2 Tm 2:2).

Given to teach. Teaching has both Old and New Testament meanings. Two primary Hebrew terms for *teach* are *yarah*, meaning “to lay or throw; to point out” and *lamad*, or “to goad” or “teach.”⁵⁴ The spiritually mature leader must lead through compliance or willingness on the part of the learner (i.e., the learner or student desires to be instructed or guided into knowledge and truth). Or the learner may need more persuasive means for learning, such as bribing or prodding. Let’s look at three Old Testament spiritual leaders whose spiritual maturity was unique, but in each case effective as the situation warranted.

Moses: The communicator and judge. The focus of Moses’s ministry was teaching or, better, explaining (*yarah*) God’s law, primarily through the Ten Commandments. Receiving direct instruction from the Lord himself (Ex 24:12), Moses was entrusted and directed by God to commit to not only the literal commandments themselves, but the essence of truth and character of God to the people (Ex 24:3). Moses’s spiritual maturity is reflected in his role as communicator, as the mouth piece of God himself, and judge of God’s law (Ex 18). Spiritual leaders, when leading with conviction of heart, oftentimes present the truths that emanate outside of themselves (i.e., God or Providence), and then communicate and adjudicate the spiritual truths of those laws.⁵⁵ The Levitical priesthood was similar in calling and purpose to Moses: teachers and overseers of God’s truth (Lev 10:11), offering of sacrifices (Lev 9), maintaining and protecting the Tabernacle (Nm 18:3), officiating in the Holy Place (Ex 30:10), and even adjudicating disputes concerning aspects of the Law (Dt 17:8-13). The point is this: Moses led through teaching and commandment; he led by demonstration of both godly and ungodly behavior (i.e., striking the rock instead of speaking to it, as directed by God). But clearly he led, not by *lamad* only, but by *yarah*. The spiritually active and sincere leader does not point to where he will not lead.

Ezra: The scribe of God. Ezra, who was a descendant of Seraiah a high priest (Neh 8:13; Ezr 7:1; 2 Kgs 25:18-21), himself was a member of the priesthood. Following on the heels of the prophets, Ezra, who was born in Babylonian captivity, commanded the attention of the Jewish community through his expert knowledge and practice of the Torah and the Commandments (Ezr 7:10). For example, he led Jewish exiles out of Babylon back into Jerusalem, and repatriated them into the knowledge and observance of their Jewish law and heritage. As a professional scribe, he knew the law functionally, but as a spiritual leader he practiced the Law of the Lord upon return to Israel. When he found the younger generation had fallen away from the practice of their forefathers, he taught and trained able and willing priests how to instruct the younger generation in the basics of Jewish faith and life. Unlike Moses, Ezra’s spiritual leadership exemplified a practical and direct approach, particularly as he witnessed the lapse of Jewish faith and

⁵⁴ BibleStudyTools.com, s.vv. “*yarah*,” “*lamad*,” <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/kjv/yarah-2.html> and <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/kjv/lamad.html>.

⁵⁵ Aaron Wildavsky, *Moses as Political Leader* (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2005).

tradition. Spiritual leaders must sometimes pull and prod as well guide and direct. How did Paul the Apostle lead?

Paul: The apostle-leader. Spiritual maturity reflects working creatively and innovatively to provide followers with a sound and stable organizational environment. The apostolic mantle carried by Paul is representative of such spiritual leadership. The apostle was not only a master-teacher, but a pioneer in organizational transformation, such as church planting and growth, business entrepreneurship, and civic foresight. Paul's dedication to his calling and responsibility as apostle is legendary.

He was born in Tarsus (2 A.D.), a city in the Roman province of Cilicia, and was executed by Nero (c. 65 A.D.). Even though he claimed Roman citizenship; Paul was born an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3:5). He was trained in the sacred writings by the religious leader Gamaliel (Acts 5:34; 22:3), and aspired to and ultimately became a Pharisee (Rom 11:1). Paul was zealous to uphold the history and heritage of his Roman brethren, but as a Pharisee, trained in the strictness and ritualism of the Law of Moses, he was adamantly opposed to the spread of Christianity.

After his spiritual conversion and calling on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6), Paul assumed the spiritual mantle and challenge of proclaiming the name of Jesus Christ to the very same people he had intended to arrest, imprison, and ultimately execute. Paul would suffer much (Acts 9:16), but his apostolic teaching, oversight, administration, and leadership of dozens of churches throughout the known world, each which posed as an embarkation point for the proclamation of the gospel, served notice of his extraordinary spiritual acumen and leadership.

The Pauline epistles, especially the two books of Corinthians, are a treasure trove on the leadership capacity of the Apostle Paul, especially focusing on his heart for people he ministered to and on his intellectual acumen regarding the strategic and tactical decisions he made regarding ministerial, cultural, economic, and political events, activities, and relationships. Over the years, authors have examined the leadership traits and qualities of Paul, lauding his character,⁵⁶ his visionary status,⁵⁷ and his servant qualities,⁵⁸ and marveling that the apostolic qualities of Paul rival that of any major contemporary leader.

The personal priorities factor is the foundation for spiritual leadership, and the crux of the personal priorities factor is character. McArthur put it succinctly: "Character—not style, not technique, not methodology, but *character*—is the true Biblical test of great leadership."⁵⁹ We further divided this first factor into four sub factors, each representing one or more of the Pauline characteristics or qualities of spiritual leadership enumerated in our text. Each sub factor represents different nuances of personal character, including the basic foundation of character (blameless and holy), the strength and stability of character (vigilant, sobriety, temperance, and

⁵⁶ MacArthur, *Called to Lead*.

⁵⁷ Richard S. Ascoug and Charles A. Cotton, *Passionate Visionary: Leadership Lessons from the Apostle Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2005).

⁵⁸ Agosto, *Servant Leadership*.

⁵⁹ MacArthur, *Called to Lead*, xi.

good behavior), exhibition of personal moderation in action of character (not given to wine, no striker, not a brawler, not soon angry, and not covetous or not a lover of money), and finally the crux of personal character which is the manifestation of spiritual maturity (holding fast to the Word of God or being apt to teach). We now turn to our second factor: fidelity of authority.

IV. FIDELITY OF AUTHORITY: A SPIRITUAL LEADERS' JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction represents the spiritual leader's commitment to his vocational accountability. Vocational accountability is the extended relationship between the spiritual leader and his area of authority. A spiritual leader by definition is, *de facto* and *de jure*, a superintendent; he is an overseer, a steward, an administrator or manager of people, plans, and property. Whether the spiritual leader is a pastor, a corporate CEO, an elected official, a nonprofit director, or in any other public interest position of leadership and accountability, his sphere of control or oversight is critical to the fulfillment of the organization's purpose. Clearly, in order for his authority to be exercised properly and with purpose, the spiritual leader must possess and exercise several key qualities of spiritual leadership, such as: not being self-willed, being the husband of one wife, ruling his own house well, and not being a novice. Before we continue with our textual analysis of these four qualities, we need to clarify the meaning of two terms: *fidelity* and *jurisdiction*.

Fidelity is defined as "faithfulness to a person, cause, or belief, (and) demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support."⁶⁰ It derives from the early fifteenth-century French term, *fidélité*, which comes from the Latin derivation *fidelitatem*, meaning "faithfulness (or) adherence (to)."⁶¹

Jurisdiction is "the official power to make (legitimate) decisions," or "the extent of official power."⁶² Jurisdiction derives from the early fourteenth century, meaning "administration of justice."⁶³ It is derived from the French derivation *juridiccion*, and directly from the Latin word "*iurisdictionem*," meaning "right law."⁶⁴

What is the relationship or association of the two terms, particularly as they apply to the development of spiritual leadership? It is obvious: a spiritual leader must not simply exercise his jurisdiction, his administration of right and wrong, his "official power." Rather, he must do so faithfully and with a cause. He must not do so simply to exercise raw power in a Machiavellian way; this is not Biblical. True character-based spiritual leaders exercise their jurisdiction with fidelity, with cause, and with faith that their decisions will produce not only action, but will do so with a sense of integrity and loyalty to higher ideals and purposes. Unrestricted or unrestrained exercise of jurisdictional

⁶⁰ Etymonline.com, s.v. "fidélité," <http://www.etymonline.com/>.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Etymonline.com, s.v. "jurisdiction," <http://www.etymonline.com/>.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

authority is anything from gross mismanagement to tyranny, whether performed in the local church, the president's office, or somewhere in between.

Not being self-willed. Interestingly enough, the key quality discussed by Paul is not being self-willed. At first glance it would seem this quality should be included in the factor personal priorities, but it is not simply because it is the foundation upon which the spiritual leader's commitment to fidelity of jurisdiction is grounded.

As we discussed, character is the key variable for spiritual leadership. MacArthur writes, "A lowly slave of unimpeachable character is more suitable for spiritual leadership than a business magnate whose integrity is questionable. A man is qualified for this role because of what he *is*, not merely because of what he *does*."⁶⁵ Likewise, not being self-willed is the linkage that connects a spiritual leader's character, virtue, or personal priorities with the exercise of his jurisdictional authority.

Self-willed, which comes from the Greek word *authades*, essentially means to please yourself. Thus, to be self-willed is to be dominated by self-interest, even arrogant about asserting one's own will. The great Biblical expositor, W.E. Vine, writes about the consequences of the self-willed person. He is "one [that is] so far overvaluing any determination at which he has himself once arrived that he will not be removed from it."⁶⁶

In Genesis 49, Jacob pronounced blessings and uttered contempt over his twelve sons for their vile actions and behavior. In verse 7, for example, Jacob criticizes Simeon and Levi for acting "angry and self-willed" when they killed Hamor and Shechem (Gn. 34:26) and destroyed a wall or fortress of protection (Gn. 49:6). Proverbs intones that "proud and haughty scorner is his name, who deals in proud wrath" (or "self-will").⁶⁷

In the New Testament, Peter tells us that self-willed, self-centered, and arrogant men and spiritual leaders are constantly speaking wrongly and negatively of all people, especially of those in some type of authority (2 Pt. 2:9-10). This is clearly unscriptural (1 Tm. 2:2). The godly and self-willed are distinguished by the attention that is focused on the one who deserves attention: God himself. The self-willed spiritual leader presumes that others *should* think of them the way *they* think of themselves. This is ungodly, even sinful.

Spiritual leaders must take care of and control over their will. They are not to direct attention to themselves, because then their purpose or cause for exercising jurisdiction will directly and defiantly be focused on themselves, and not upon those they serve. Let's examine the Old Testament figure, Nabal, for demonstration of how self-will is devastating upon the exercise of spiritual influence and leadership.

The foolish spiritual leader: Nabal. Samuel is dead (1 Sam 25:1). The great prophet-leader, the one who led the Israelites through word and deed, was buried in Ramah. David, who was still running from Saul, encountered a person named Nabal. Nabal was wealthy and influential; he lived near Carmel (1 Sam 25:2). Nabal was in the

⁶⁵ MacArthur, *Called to Lead*, 175.

⁶⁶ Vine's *Expository Dictionary*, 342.

⁶⁷ Prv 21:24.

process of shearing his sheep. David heard of it and sent messengers to Nabal to inquire as to whether or not he would provide David with minimal provisions, thinking that Nabal would be open and willing to do so, since David and his band of ruffians had ample opportunity to kill Nabal's herders and take his sheep and goats. Instead they protected Nabal's herds from marauding bands of Bedouin (1 Sam 25:15; 25). But Nabal's self-centered response in verses 10 and 11 demonstrated not only his shoddy character but his self-centeredness, too:

Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?

Needless to say, David did not receive Nabal's response very well. David prepared to kill Nabal for his "churlish" and insulting attitude, gearing himself and his band of 400 fighters (vv. 13-14). Abigail, Nabal's beautiful and sage wife, intervened, ordering her servants to prepare provisions and give them to David. She then fell prostrate before the soon-to-be king and begged his forgiveness for her husband's insensitive and self-directed actions (vv. 14-20). David accepted Abigail's response (v. 35), while Nabal, after awakening from a drunken stupor, died of a heart attack after hearing from Abigail how close he had come to being killed by David and his men (vv. 36-38).

Nabal is a perfect illustration of how spiritual leaders, especially those blessed with great wealth, should not behave toward others. Spiritual leaders, regardless of their position or power, should (1) be ready to take advice, (2) be willing to defer back to others as much as reasonably can be assumed, and (3) be as closely aligned with others as is possible, without falling into sin. Spiritual leaders must be willing to admit when they are wrong and others are right, defer to them, acknowledge that others are more gifted in areas that the spiritual leader is not, and receive information and knowledge necessary to make wise decisions.

Nabal's self-willed behavior exemplifies the destructive effect upon faithfulness of action and oversight. Nabal had the opportunity to use his great wealth and influence to strategic advantage—not just for himself, but for the furtherance of God's kingdom through David's hands. But even if Nabal did not think or act in a politically strategic manner, opening himself up to David through friendship, rather than distancing himself through self-willed behavior, was the morally correct thing to do. Spiritual leaders do not take advantage of others, nor, as in Nabal's case, disregard kindness simply because it does not sit well with them.

Husband of one wife. More than any one of the qualities of spiritual leadership discussed here (e.g., one that rules his own house, not a novice, and not self-willed), the Pauline injunction of the spiritual leader to the "husband of one wife" strikes to the heart of fidelity of jurisdiction. Let's explore this quality in more depth.

Christian marriage is to be the most sacred of all institutions. The spiritual union of one man and one woman being united in holy matrimony is not only supposed to be the foundation of a sound and moral society and culture, but symbolizes the spiritual

union of the church and Jesus Christ. It is the finest example of a true relationship, a “fidelity relationship;” the type of relationship that should be mirrored between the spiritual leader and his followers.

The primary focus of the spiritual leader is fidelity, but if a spiritual leader will not be faithful to his marriage vows, then it is highly unlikely he will be faithful or devoted to his followers and his jurisdictional accountability.

State of Christian marriage in the U.S. Christian marriage is a sanctified union, where the husband and wife are created from and for each other (Gn 2:22-25). Marriage is to be an indissoluble bond, unbroken by anyone (Mk 10:5-9). Further, it is a spiritual union between one man and one woman, embodying the one-flesh relationship between two people of the opposite sex (1 Cor 6:19; Eph 5:31). Same-sex marriages are not to be sanctified or acceptable before God and man. But setting aside the gay-marriage debate, what happens when this holy and undivided one-flesh relationship is broken or damaged? What happens to the unity, loyalty, and fidelity necessary for the continuation of the relationship? Further, what does this dissolution mean with regard to the relationship between the spiritual leader and his followers?

W. Bradford Wilcox, director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, contends that even though the divorce rate in the U.S. since the 1980s has not continued its striking upward trend seen in the 1960s and 1970s, the consequences of divorce are now cultural and social. He states that they are being “felt disproportionately by the poor and less educated, while the wealthy elites who set off these transformations in the first place have managed to reclaim somewhat healthier and more stable habits of married life.”⁶⁸ In other words, one of the main problems of U.S. divorce patterns is not its direction—although it is certainly positive that it has decreased—but its cultural impact, including religious.

In 2009, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that over two million American marriages ended in divorce. Although the marriage rate is approximately 6.8 per 1,000, the divorce rate is almost one half of this rate at 3.4 per 1,000 population.⁶⁹ However, while family and marriage scholars, such as Bradley Wright of the University of Connecticut, contend that the divorce rate among Christians is approximately 42 percent compared to “religiously unaffiliated” Americans of 50 percent, George Barna of The Barna Group places the divorce rate for Christians even lower, at approximately 33 percent.⁷⁰ The primary difference is definition. Wright and others question The Barna Group’s specific and controversial definitions of *born again Christians* versus *evangelicals*. Born again is marked by a “commitment to Jesus Christ” and knowledge they will “go to heaven” as a result of their commitment, while an evangelical is also “born again” but must meet other specific criteria, such as witnessing

⁶⁸ W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Evolution of Divorce,” *National Affairs* 1 (Fall 2009): 81-94.

⁶⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Births, Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths: Provisional Data for 2009,” *National Vital Statistics Reports* 58, no. 25 (August 27, 2010): 1-6.

⁷⁰ “New Marriage and Divorce Statistics Released,” *The Barna Group*, March 31, 2008, <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released?q=marriage+divorce+statistics+2008>.

to others of their faith.⁷¹ Wright and others look largely at church attendance rather than examine theological differences to assess divorce rate distinction between believers and nonbelievers or the religiously unaffiliated, meaning those who attend church infrequently.

More importantly, for the purpose of this article, the divorce rate among evangelical pastors, which is part of a broader “burnout rate” among evangelical clergy, is also alarming. PastorBurnout.com reported in a 2010 *New York Times* article stating, “Members of the clergy now suffer from obesity, hypertension and depression at rates higher than most Americans.”⁷² Divorce rates among pastors were high on the list of criteria that is a contributing factor to “pastor burnout.” The Francis Schaeffer Institute reported the results of a survey conducted of pastors at two separate conferences held in Florida (2005) and California (2006). The results were shocking:

- 77 percent of pastors surveyed felt they did not have a good marriage
- 38 percent of pastors said they were divorced or currently in a divorce process
- 40 percent said they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry
- 50 percent of pastors’ marriages will end in divorce⁷³

What do these facts about Christian marriage tell us about the fidelity to authority required of spiritual leaders? First, fidelity to authority is a critical variable for leadership in general and specifically spiritual leadership. Spiritual leaders are expected to be committed not only to their leadership calling but also to the fulfillment of their followers. Spiritual leaders who recognize and practice fidelity to authority and jurisdictional accountability practice *service leadership*. No other type of leadership can emerge. Service leadership is not necessarily servant leadership. The latter suggests a transformational and even transparent action on the part of the leader, whether toward his followers or toward fulfillment of a task or purpose. Of course, this is important and critical to evoking true followership. Service leadership, on the other hand, represents not only an action, but a relationship. Thus second, the Pauline requirement of the “husband of one wife” represents the truest and deepest form of not only fidelity in action, but fidelity in relationship, summoning the strongest commitment to organizational plan and purpose, and “oneness” in relationship and service to the spiritual leader’s constituent, clientele, and/or followers. In other words, a spiritual leader’s commitment to a marriage relationship speaks loudly toward his ability of commitment for carrying out his duty, and being accountable to his office or authority.

⁷¹ Adelle M. Banks, “Christians Question Divorce Rates of Faithful,” *USA Today*, March 14, 2011, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/religion/2011-03-14-divorce-christians_N.htm.

⁷² “Pastor Burnout Statistics,” *PastorBurnout.com*, <http://www.pastorburnout.com/pastor-burnout-statistics.html>.

⁷³ Richard J. Krejcir, “Statistics on Pastors,” *Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development*, www.churchleadership.org. This data is from 1,050 pastors who were surveyed from two pastor’s conferences held in Orange County, CA (2005) and Pasadena, CA (2006). It is a follow-up survey to an original one given in 1989.

Rules well his own house. A spiritual leader's fidelity to authority and jurisdictional accountability cannot materialize outside of his organizational jurisdiction if in fact his own home, or personal jurisdiction, is bombarded by disloyalty and faithlessness. The key is that the disloyalty and faithlessness is not coming from others, directed toward the spiritual leader, but from the leader himself. In other words, if he is not capable of enlisting loyalty and faithfulness from his own home, primarily his children, toward his leadership, then he is not going to enlist followership in the church environment. Let me explain.

The Greek word for *rules* is *proistemi*, which essentially means to stand at attention. (He uses the same word in Romans 12:8, where the pastor is to rule diligently.) But here in 1 Timothy 3, Paul refers to the spiritual leader's family. So it seems clear that Paul means for a pastor or elder for that matter to rule his church as he would (or should) rule his own home.

Clearly, the spiritual leader is held to a high standard of personal attention to decorum, but the spiritual leader's home, primarily his children, and by default, his wife, are to be in obedience, or subjection to the God-given authority of the spiritual leader (Eph 5:21). Notice, and let me be clear about this, the subjection noted in the text is not to the person, but to the office, to the authority granted to the person via the power of the authority. A simple illustration is when an enlisted man salutes an officer, he is not saluting or acknowledging the man or woman officer; he is saluting the rank, and the authority that accompanies the rank. The enlisted personnel exhibit fidelity to rank or authority, not to the person. This is what Paul notes here: the spiritual leader's home, including children and spouse, is subjection to the authority or rank that God has granted to the spiritual leader (Eph 5:22-24). And likewise, the spiritual leader must take care to "rule well" or "oversee" his own home, his own jurisdiction (Eph 5:25-26) before he can ever be expected to demonstrate fidelity to authority over his vocational or organizational jurisdiction.

Not a novice. Lastly, Paul commands that the spiritual leader must exhibit, demonstrate, or have evidence of experience in leadership; he is not to be a *novice*, or neophyte, meaning a young convert, lest he will be carried off in pride and condemnation by the enemy of his soul (1 Tm 3:6). Paul is clear on this point: for a spiritual leader to exhibit fidelity to authority and jurisdictional accountability, whether he is pastor or holds some other office, he must have experience. Experience in leading is not necessary from a performance standpoint, meaning an experienced versus inexperienced leader has the knowledge and years of practitioner in the particular field, and thus will be more effective. No, the spiritual leader requires experience, both in terms of understanding and practice, because he will not be self-absorbed, he will not be tempted to think about himself and his plans, purposes, and accomplishments, and thus be motivated by hubris rather than humility. A novice lacks the grounding and temperament needed to lead with excellence; instead, the novice will as Paul indicates, be "lifted up in pride" and the results, both personally and organizationally, can be extreme (Prv 16:18). Let's look at Timothy, a protégé of Paul's, and a spiritual leader.

Timothy: Paul's leader-protégé in the Lord. Timothy is one of the best known of Paul's students, companions, and mentorees. In fact, Timothy was one of Paul's converts at Lystra during Paul's first missionary trip (Acts 16:1; 1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tm 1:2; 2 Tm 1:2). Later, during the second missionary trip, Paul enjoins Timothy (2 Tm 3:15). Paul is drawn to Timothy for many reasons: Timothy's loyalty, his spiritual desire, but also because of his "unfeigned faith," a Christian character, and his suitability for ministry work (Acts 16:3). Paul ordains Timothy (1 Tm 4:14; 2 Tm 1:6), culminating in his participation on Paul's third missionary trip as well (Acts 19:22).

Suffice it to say, Paul trusted Timothy like he trusted himself, or better like Paul trusted the Lord: unconditionally. Paul believed in Timothy's character, he recognized Timothy's devotion, and he witnessed his determination and hard work over the many years. Paul trusted in Timothy's fidelity to authority and jurisdictional accountability that after the second missionary trip, where they worked in Berea and in the larger region of Galatia (modern-day Turkey), planting churches and reaping spiritual converts, Paul ultimately left Timothy in charge of building up and strengthening the Church at Berea (Acts 17:14). From here on, Timothy became a close confidant of Paul, ministering not only in Berea, but in Macedonia, Corinth, and again in Ephesus, where he accompanied Paul on his third and last missionary trip (Acts 19:22).

The point is clear: Timothy is trusted by Paul. Why? Paul recognized in Timothy not only the desire to minister, the call to minister, but the commitment to spiritual leadership; a commitment that was birthed in the work of the ministry—a work that did not simply add to Timothy's resume, but demonstrated to Paul (and others too) that though Timothy was young chronologically, and perhaps even as a believer, he was solidly grounded and entrenched in fulfilling the plans and purposes of God, not as Paul received his directive from God, but as Timothy himself received his calling from the Lord. It is not necessarily the number of years, but it is the commitment to purpose that distinguishes the neophyte from the mentor; that determines with clarity the sense of fidelity to authority and jurisdictional accountability that the spiritual leader possesses.

V. COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY: A SPIRITUAL LEADER'S COMMITMENT TO FULFILLING THE PUBLIC GOOD

Spiritual leadership's influence is not limited to the confines of a designated position or function; it has responsibility to reach out to fulfill the greater public good. Spiritual leaders are not to confine their influence to the jurisdiction over which they have direct authority. Spiritual leadership demands outreach to the broader community tangent to the spiritual leader's jurisdictional oversight.⁷⁴

Given to hospitality. In addition to our texts in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, two additional textual references are instructive: Romans 12 and 1 Peter 4. In Romans 12:13, Paul discusses how Christians are to demonstrate hospitality to each other by meeting the material needs of other Christians. This passage in Romans 12 is directed

⁷⁴ Stephen M. King, *God and Caesar: The Biblical Keys to Good Government and Community Action* (Fairfax, VA: Xulon Press, 2002).

toward the whole body of Christ, where Paul addresses the practical and spiritual gifts alike. Notice in verse 9 and continuing through verse 16, Paul is very practical, regarding not only the communal responsibilities of Christians toward one another but to the world (v. 14). The Romans passage is not referenced specifically to spiritual leaders, but clearly Christians in general (as well as Christian leaders) are to project to others and to implement the love of Christ (Eph 3:19). One way of doing this is to meet material needs (1 Cor 16:1; Heb 6:10; 1 Jn 3:17).

Look especially at 1 John 3:17:

But whoso has this world's good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?

Author translation: "If you have money (and one might argue influence, and you know there is a need that you can meet, and you don't do anything to meet that need, then the love of God is in not in your heart." That is strong language. And remember, this is not a recommendation, it is a commandment! If this is what God expects of Christians who are not spiritual leaders; imagine how much more he expects of those who are placed in positions of leadership (1 Pet 5:1-11).

Look at Hebrews 13:1-2: "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." The word *entertain* is the Greek word, *xenizo*, which is from *xenos*, where we get the word *guest*. Christians have a responsibility to treat others with hospitality, with kindness, with care, even if they are strangers.

Mark 6:34 states, "Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things." In the Greek, *compassion* refers to a strong yearning one has for another. Jesus, the ultimate spiritual leader, reached out to those who were part of his "flock," his jurisdiction so to speak, but he also reached out to the unlovely (the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4) and the unwanted (the lepers). Spiritual leaders, today, are to reach out through churches, nonprofits, and faith-based initiatives to reach the "unlovely," the "unwanted," and the "forgotten."⁷⁵

We are responsible for our gifts and calling and for our ministries. Likewise, spiritual leaders are responsible not only to their authority and jurisdiction, but they are responsible to engage the larger community. The first line of defense is not the civil government, it is the lowest level of social institutions, beginning with self and moving to nonprofit and faith-based organizations and initiatives.⁷⁶

Look at 1 Peter 4:9: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." Peter, who is speaking to Christians about what our behavior should be during the end times, is clearly speaking to not only lay Christians, but spiritual leaders. For pastors, they should enjoin their congregations to engage the world, to reach out beyond the confines of our comfortable houses of worship, where we sing praises to God, while at the same time we watch the poor and the homeless wither before our eyes. For businessmen, they are

⁷⁵ Marvin Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992).

⁷⁶ Steven Monsma, *Healing for a Broken World: Christian Perspectives on Public Policy* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007).

to invest, to contribute to the community they do business in, give back to the people and organizations and institutions who contribute to their “bottom line,” particularly through matching contributions to community actors and activities, matching educational and scholarship contributions, working with schools, churches, and other nonprofit organizations. For civic personnel, such as politicians, it means garnering financial and organizational support for civic and community projects, projects that benefit the greater public good, such as parks, civic centers, economic and community development initiatives, and many other opportunities. The Bible is replete with such examples. Let’s examine one in particular: the Good Samaritan.

The Good Samaritan. Responding to an inquiring lawyer regarding (1) how to inherit eternal life, and (2) how to define for selfish reasons who is the lawyer’s neighbor, Jesus tells the famous story of the kind-hearted Samaritan in Luke 10: 30-34:

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

This is a simple, but compelling story of human suffering, empathy (or the lack thereof), and ultimately compassion. The priest, who symbolizes the religious leader, who cannot be soiled by touching a bloody body, quickly moves away, even to the far side of the rocky path, illustrating how even friends, or “kinsman,” often time “stand afar off,” away from someone else’s pain (Ps 38:11). The Levite is a descendant of Levi, one of the ancient tribes of Israel (Gn 29:34), which produced essentially assistants to the priests, who were also Levites, who were set apart by Moses for ordination to the service of God (Ex 32). Interestingly, the Levite in this story actually came to the wounded Jew and inspected him, but because the Levite was forbidden from engaging persons who were not “clean,” he, too, quickly moved to the other side of the road. Finally, the Samaritan, who of course is a non-Jew, really a Gentile, and thus according to Jewish law and heritage, is not worthy, goes to the wounded Jewish man, attends to his wounds, transports him to an inn, and pays for his care. It is the Samaritan, the one who was viewed by Jewish society, law, and tradition as being less than human, who reached out and embodied human compassion. The Samaritan not only extended kindness and care to the supposedly least in society, but he did so with empathy, without caring who the person was, or where he had come from, or what his background was. The Samaritan treated this stranger as a non-stranger, working at the lowest-level of service. The Samaritan exemplified spiritual leadership, reaching out to meet a need as it arose, where it arose.

Spiritual leaders reach to the center of the community, to the heart of the neighborhood, going beyond their jurisdiction, and engaging the community and the

people that make up the community, in order to contribute back. Spiritual leaders reach to the roots or foundation of the community. This is true leadership.

Good report of those without. In 1 Timothy 3:7, Paul writes, “Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” This final quality of spiritual leadership may be the most important. It demands the most from the spiritual leader, including, perhaps, even his life. Paul’s exhortation to Timothy, and effectively all spiritual leaders to come, is to be a “testimony,” specifically of the work of Christ, to the world, that is, to the people and system that is outside or not of the Christian faith. This is effectively what God did for the world through his son, Jesus Christ. First John 4:14 explains: “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son (to be) the savior of the world.”

An excellent testimony, as we will see, is not simply standing up in a Christian-friendly environment, and testifying of Jesus’ love and grace—although this is certainly noteworthy. No, Paul had something much more dramatic, yet at the same time common place, in mind when he penned this phrase. Paul is confiding to Timothy that spiritual leaders are to testify, even to death if necessary, of the goodness of Jesus Christ, especially and even to those who are nonbelievers. The scriptures are filled with illustrations of the kind of human witness by leaders and non-leaders alike that defended and promoted the person of Jesus Christ, even to the point of death (Mk 14:55, 56, 59; Lk 22:71; Jn 1:7; 3:11, 3:32, 19:35, 21:24; Heb 11:32-39; 1 Jn 5:9-11; 3 Jn 12). And Christian history, too, is filled with examples of the defenders of the Christian faith, even martyrs, men and women who freely and willingly gave their lives in sacrifice for the defense of the gospel message of Jesus Christ.⁷⁷

But, at the same time, even though there are many examples where men and women gave the ultimate sacrifice, both scripturally and historically, there are many examples too where spiritual leaders proclaim the power and person of Jesus Christ, and dramatic, positive results occur, contributing to the furtherance of the kingdom of God. Three short Biblical illustrations best represent this testimony: Peter in the temple, Paul before the council, and Jesus as a witness to the world.

Peter in the temple. After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, Peter confronts an unruly and suspicious Jewish crowd gathered in the temple courtyard. He stands and preaches a powerful gospel message, harking back to their Jewish forefathers and the Torah itself, including the Book of Joel, which prophesied of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Jl 2:28, 29), and even King David, who was the spiritual embodiment and kingdom maker of and for the power of Jesus Christ. The spiritual leader, Peter, challenges the Jewish crowd, shakes them to their spiritual core, even goading them to believe (v. 32). When the crowd thought they had finally heard enough, many of them were “pricked in their heart,” and they inquired as to how they might be saved (v. 37). Peter responds:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost. For the promise

⁷⁷ John Fox, *Fox’s Book of Martyrs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978).

is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Paul before the Jewish Council. Paul is apprehended in Jerusalem (Acts 21:15). He purified himself for seven days and then entered the temple (v. 27). His Jewish enemies made false charges (v. 28), captured him, threw him out of the temple, and would have killed him had he not been rescued by Roman centurions (v. 32). Paul tried to defend his name, his place, and his message (Acts 22), but he is condemned before the Jewish council, led by Ananias, the high priest (Acts 22:12, 23:2). Finally, Paul is given his opportunity to speak, and his testimony is convincing (Acts 23:3-11): he is told by the angel of the Lord that he will be able to testify, too, of Jesus in Rome itself (Acts 24). As a spiritual leader, Paul is unafraid of the consequences that his testimony might bring upon himself (Phil 3:4-21). He simply engages in the work that God called him to on that day long ago when he was struck down by the power of God on the road to Damascus (Acts 9).

Jesus: The penultimate testimony. Jesus, of course, is the greatest testimony of the Christian faith. He *is* the Christian faith. He testifies before his accusers (Mt 27:1-2; Mk 15:4-5a); he testifies at his crucifixion (Lk 23:33a-34); he testifies before Thomas after his resurrection, but before his ascension (Jn 20:29); and he testifies at his ascension (Lk 24:50-53). Jesus' entire life, character, and behavior testified of his spiritual leadership. He ministered to those in need (Jn 4), he taught and prophesied of his sacrifice (Mt 6-7), and he lived the meaning of servant leadership (Mk 10:42-45). Up to his death, at his death, during his resurrection, and through his ascension, Jesus demonstrated the principles and qualities of spiritual leadership.

These three illustrations clearly describe the sacrifice spiritual leaders embrace and commit to when engaging the broader community. Death and hardship are not always expected, but trials and tribulations do occur when the spiritual leader unveils himself, his character, and his behavior to the community outside of his traditional jurisdiction. The crux is this: providing a "good report to those without" is not simply social and graceful; it is a *modus operandi* for proclaiming the greater good of the spiritual leader's purpose. But as we will briefly discuss in the next section, when the spiritual leader's personal priorities, fidelity to authority, and community responsibility are compromised, then a breach or crisis in spiritual leadership—and leadership overall—occurs. The consequences can be troubling.

VI. THOUGHTS ON CRISIS IN SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Crises are by definition difficult and even dangerous times. Crises can be natural disasters, like hurricanes, tornadoes, and tsunamis. Or they can be manmade, such as terrorist attacks or wars. Leaders are many times defined and labeled, rightly or wrongly, by their reaction to and decisions made during times of crisis. Winston Churchill will always be known by the British people as the greatest political leader of WWII. He stood toe to toe against Hitler and his Nazi war machine and refused to be

intimidated. Abraham Lincoln, too, will likely always be remembered as the greatest U.S. war-time president—even more so than FDR—primarily because the crisis he worked through was a civil war, devastating to himself personally and professionally, and to the nation as a whole.

The focus of this discussion, however, is not toward a single event labeled as “crisis,” such as “crisis leadership” or “crisis management.” Rather, the point is not crisis *of* leadership, but crisis *in* leadership, specifically, crisis in the three factors examined when trying to fulfill spiritual leadership. What happens when there is a breach or breakdown in these three factors? How is spiritual leadership compromised or weakened when character, authority, and responsibility are not functioning properly in a spiritual leader’s life and work?

The lack of or diminished presence and action of personal priorities, or character-framing qualities or traits, in spiritual leaders is most profound, and is negatively affecting and even leading to the erosion of trust in spiritual leadership and the institutions and organizations that spiritual leaders lead. The number and increasing severity of “ethical-less” incidents in business, government, politics, ministry, education, and family continue to increase at an alarming rate. Insider stock trading, illicit sexual encounters involving spiritual leaders, and the list goes on involve at the core a betrayal of trust and diminished emphasis on a spiritual leader’s moral principles and ethical practices. It signals a low level of character transformation, and thus negatively overtly influences the actions of the spiritual leader.

Secondly, the breach of fidelity of authority, particularly through the continued lack of commitment by the spiritual leader toward his jurisdictional oversight, is alarming. Commitment to purpose, fulfillment of goals, achievement of mission, and pursuit of vision is oftentimes derailed as a result of a lack of stability in spiritual leadership. Substitution of mission for the meeting of immediate bottom-line results compromises the overall purpose of the institution or organization. Tom Peters and Robert Waterman wrote in their bestseller *In Search of Excellence* that a corporation should “stick to the knitting,” which means to do one thing and do it well.⁷⁸ Diversifying simply for the sake of diversification is not beneficial to the company in the long run, if the diversity in products or services takes away from the original purpose of the company and ideals of the founder. Being committed to a government program, a ministry, or an educational initiative is critical not only to programmatic success, but to the integrity and credibility of spiritual leadership.

And third, there is a crisis in community responsibility. Contemporary spiritual leaders too often do not reach beyond their jurisdiction to the broader community at the rate and level of intensity that their forefathers did. Marvin Olasky chronicled the historical impact of spiritual compassion, which was manifested through the outreach of families, neighbors, local churches, schools, charities, nonprofit organizations from the inception of the nation to the early part of the twentieth century.⁷⁹ But once the impending Progressive Era emerged, complete with greater centralization of authority,

⁷⁸ Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, *In Search of Excellence* (New York: HarperCollins, 1982).

⁷⁹ Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*.

command, and control of the economy, and various other criteria that negated self-governance and self-reliance, significant retrenchment of American compassion occurred. Some patterns of renewal of self-identification and responsibility have emerged over the last several decades, but for much of the last fifty years the institutions and organizations of social responsibility have withered, replaced by greater emphasis on centralizing mechanisms of assistance, whether from the government, mega-churches, large-scale NGOs, or even White House-led faith-based initiatives.⁸⁰ This crisis in community responsibility on the part of spiritual leadership is profound and stark: reaching out to others has almost become passé. Some hope exists in the Millennial Generation, where young spiritual leaders find it within their core being to reach beyond the walls of their jurisdiction and meet needs where they exist.⁸¹ The question is, how long will this desire last?

VII. CONCLUSION

This lengthy discussion of spiritual leadership is meant to (1) describe the meaning and application of the concept that scales beyond the typical ministerial understanding of the term; (2) examine the Biblical and cultural meaning of spiritual leadership; and (3) by implication raise many questions as to the authenticity, stability, and even credibility of such a term, particularly during the tumultuous time period we live in, suggesting that spiritual leadership is in a crisis mode.

Certainly this article is not the end of the discussion; hopefully, it is just the beginning. It argues for greater clarity and consistency in defining spiritual leadership; it contends that spiritual leadership has a Biblical basis, but a socio-cultural application; and it reflects multi-dimensional implications surrounding the role and influence of spiritual leaders in today's society. Expounding on the virtues and vanities of spiritual leadership is tantamount to fomenting a revolution in leadership development and research. Significant knowledge and even wisdom can be gained from future Biblical, socio-cultural, and theological research in the definition, conceptualization, and empirical implications of spiritual research, but at what cost to the current trends of research in leadership studies?

About the Author

Stephen M. King received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1990. He is professor of political science and the R. Philip Loy Endowed Chair of Political Science at Taylor University, where he teaches undergraduate courses in the areas of American government, public administration, and public policy. He

⁸⁰ Sheila Suess Kennedy and Wolfgang Bielefeld, *Charitable Choice at Work: Evaluating Faith-Based Job Programs in the States* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2006).

⁸¹ Thom S. Rainer and Jess Rainer, *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2011).

developed and oversaw a Master's of Public Administration (MPA) at Regent University from 1998-2002. His current research agenda focuses on the development of spiritual leadership.

Email: stking@taylor.edu
