Tools for Wise Leadership

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

Series 12: Self-Leadership
Talk 03: The Leader as a Role Model of Character

Welcome to the programme **Tools for Wise Leadership**. In this series of programmes we are focusing on self-leadership. In order to lead others well you have to lead yourself well first. So what does this mean? In the last two programmes we have explored what this means in terms of the Christian leader as a role model based on Romans 14:17-18 which says, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men."

Today we want to focus more specifically on character as the heart of Christian leadership, particularly leadership within the church. In 1 Tim 3.1-13 Paul articulates the kind of qualities needed in bishops (overseers) and deacons. Here Paul gave sixteen qualifications for a man to meet if he expects to serve as a church leader. We will only be able to comment on some of them. A bishop or overseer, Paul says, must be above reproach. Other versions say "blameless". This does not mean that one should be perfect, for no man can be perfect. But there must be nothing in his life that Satan or the unsaved can take hold of in order to criticize or attack the church.

In the same vein Paul says that a church leader must also have a good reputation with outsiders, not just with those within the church. He must be the husband of one wife, showing a good example by not divorcing and remarrying, or being polygamous. Marriage is a holy estate, showing the covenant relationship between Christ and the church and so must not be treated lightly. Paul says a man's ability to manage his own marriage and home indicates ability to oversee a local church. It is not likely that people with marital difficulties would consult a man who could not keep his own marriage together.

Furthermore a leader must be temperate and self-controlled. He must be Respectable. You know there are some people who command respect, whereas others act so childishly and foolishly that other people do not feel the urge to respect them.

He must be hospitable, which literally means "loving the stranger." This was an important ministry in the early church when traveling believers would need places to stay. But even today, a pastor and his wife who are hospitable are a great help to the fellowship of a local church.
He must be able to teach, which means that a pastor must be a careful student of the Word of God.

He must not be given to drunkenness. Now the fact that Paul advised Timothy to use wine for medicinal purposes in 1 Timothy 5:23 indicates that total abstinence was not demanded of believers. But the moment one takes enough wine to get drunk he is no longer sober and respectable. The fact that drinking creates the danger of this happening makes it wise for Christian leaders to avoid it altogether. A godly pastor would certainly want to give the best example and not be an excuse for sin in the life of some weaker brother.

He must not be violent but gentle. He must not be quarrelsome.

He must be not a lover of money. It is possible to use the ministry as an easy way to make money, if a man has no conscience or integrity. In 1 Timothy 6:6-10 Paul taught that "godliness with contentment is great gain. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many

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foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." So a pastor, Bishop or overseer must not be a lover of money.

To enable these qualities to be upheld Paul proceeds to say that a church leader must not be a recent convert

Deacons, too, are regarded as important and they too must be suitably qualified. According to Acts 6 the first deacons were appointed to be assistants to the Apostles. In a local church today deacons relieve the pastors/elders of other tasks so that they may be able to concentrate on the ministry of the Word, prayer, and spiritual oversight. But such people must also have certain qualities which Paul also lists.
They must be men worthy of respect.
They must be sincere. The Greek word used here is that a deacon must not be double-tongued. In other words he does not say one thing to one member and something entirely opposite to another member. You can depend on what he says. That is being sincere or not double tongued.
They must not indulge in much wine
They must not pursuing dishonest gain
They must be doctrinally sound. It says in verse 9 that they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. In other words they must understand Christian doctrine and obey it with a good conscience. It is not enough to sit in meetings and decide how to "run the church." They must base their decisions on the Word of God, and they must back up their decisions with godly lives.

They must first be tested before they are assigned such a responsibility. It is worth noting that quite a few leaders mentioned in the Bible were first tested as servants. Joseph was a servant in Egypt for thirteen years before he became a second ruler in the land. Moses cared for sheep for forty years before God called him. Joshua was Moses' servant before he became Moses' successor. David was tending his father's sheep when Samuel anointed him king of Israel. Even our Lord Jesus came as a servant and laboured as a carpenter; and the Apostle Paul was a tentmaker. The principle is being a servant first before becoming a ruler. It always weakens the testimony of a local church when a member who has not been proved is made an officer of the church, maybe because of their money or influential position in society.

Like Elders, deacons must also run godly homes with respectful wives who are not gossipers.

When you look at such qualifications of church leaders and helpers, you will see that it is a serious matter to serve the local church. Each of us must search his own heart to be certain that he is qualified by the grace of God.

Now here is a very important observation when we look at these qualifications of church leaders in 1 Tim 3. Most of them have to do with character and attitude more than they have to do with skills. But is this how leaders are chosen in your church? My observation is that most churches choose leaders based on skills more than they choose leaders based on character. But isn't this a big part of the problem in our churches? We have skilful people who have no character. So what do you expect of a skilful accountant who is made a church treasurer but has no integrity? Not hard to guess, right? Money starts disappearing as the clever treasurer starts "cooking the books"!

What we have been saying in this series is that we need to lead ourselves first before we can effectively lead others. That means to be a leader you must be able to say, like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." If you can sincerely say that then you have mustered self-leadership and you are now able to lead others.

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Now that you know these tools of wise leadership, blessed are you if you put them into practice. Please don't forget to tune into the next programme for more tools of wise leadership.

Discussion Questions for: Series 12 - Talk 03 - The Leader as a Role Model of Character

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

Study Question 1: for Personal reflection
What does this episode mean to you personally as a leader?

Study Question 2: for Group Discussion
What does this topic mean you as a group of leaders?

Study Question 3: for applying the topic
What can you apply from this topic in your role as a leader?

Summary:

Character is at the heart of Christian leadership, particularly for leadership in the Church.

Discussion Questions:

Study Question 1: Personal reflection

Am I growing and developing my qualities in the area of being blameless and of good reputation?

Study Question 2: Group Discussion

Looking into God's Word, what sin is there in my life that hampers my ability to lead? How mature do you consider yourself for leading?

Study Question 3: Applying the topic

How can I become the appropriate kind of leader to lead God's people effectively?

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