



PART 1

PAUL IN CHAINS:

LEADERSHIP

IN ACTION

Chapter One

EARNING TRUST

A crisis of leadership faces both the world and the church. As I write these words, the headlines in the secular press are all about leaders in the corporate world who have been guilty of appalling moral negligence. They have bankrupted major corporations because of their own personal greed. They have engaged in illegal insider trading. They have lied, cheated, stolen, and swindled. The scope and scale of corporate corruption in the world today are almost inconceivable.

In the political realm, the picture may be even more bleak. The moral scandals that rocked the Clinton White House changed the climate of American politics in the 1990's. The lesson of that episode (as far as some politicians are concerned) seemed to be that a person can lie and cheat and lack moral integrity—and yet not necessarily forfeit his career as a politician. Personal integrity, apparently, is no longer a requirement for political office. In the post-Clinton culture, a serious moral indiscretion seems to be no significant impediment to candidates for public office.

In the visible church, sadly, things are little better. The televangelist scandals of the 1980s seem to be all but forgotten. Nothing much really changed in the wake of the scandals. If anything, the state of so-called “Christian” television is far worse than it was before. Most Christian TV celebrities are still making greedy, nonstop appeals for money. Christian recording artists keep embarrassing the church with scandalous moral failures. **And we still regularly hear of pastors who discredit their ministries and disqualify themselves by defaulting in the one thing that matters most in leadership: character.**

Both church and world seem to have traded away the notion of leadership for celebrity. Today's heroes are people who are famous for being famous. They are not necessarily (and not even *usually*) men and women of character. **Real leadership is in seriously short supply.**

CH-110 LEADERSHIP 1

Dr. Eddie Idefonso

Lecture # 1



In a sense, however, the leadership vacuum presents a tremendous opportunity. The world is crying out for leaders—great heroic, noble, trustworthy leaders. We need leaders at every level of the social order—from political leaders in the international realm to spiritual leaders in the church and the family.

And most people recognize that need. A number of years ago in the early 1980's I attended a special meeting of admission standards with college presidents at the University of Southern California. At the same time, a conference on leadership was being held in an adjacent hall. We all mingled during the lunch hour. A table was set up in the lobby, displaying dozens of recent books on leadership. As I listened to the discussions and perused the book table, I realized that the severity of the current leadership crisis is common knowledge. How to *solve* the crisis, however, seems to be a puzzle to most, even to some of the most powerful men in the academic world.

Could it be that people don't see how the leadership crisis stems from a loss of integrity? I don't think so. In fact, the titles on that book table included several volumes that highlighted the need for character, decency, honor, and ethics. People certainly seem to have at least a vague notion that character issues lie at the heart of the leadership crisis.

The problem is that we live in an era where the very definition of *character* has become fuzzy. People bemoan the loss of integrity in general terms, but few have any clear idea of what “**integrity**” entails anymore. Moral standards have been systematically obliterated.

Ours is the first society since the decaying Roman Empire to normalize homosexuality.

We're living in the first generation in hundreds of years that has legalized abortion. Adultery and divorce are epidemic.

Pornography is now an enormous industry and a major blight on the moral character of society.

Virtually no clear moral or ethical standards are universally accepted anymore.

No wonder principled, uncompromising personal integrity is hard to find.

But I'm optimistic. I'm convinced this is an era of unprecedented opportunity for the church—if we'll take advantage of it. The leadership vacuum is screaming to be filled. If godly men and women will step out and *lead*, people are prepared to follow the right kind of example. Hostile times and adverse circumstances are no impediment to a true leader. In fact, great adversity can be turned to great advantage by the power of an influential leader.

We see an illustration of that truth, in microcosm, in the apostle Paul's experience in [Acts 27](#).



If you want a human model of leadership, I don't think you'll ever find a better model than Paul. Paul is my hero as a leader. He was a true leader of people, and his leadership rose to the occasion in every conceivable situation.

His leadership abilities had nothing to do with titles. He wasn't governor of any territory; he wasn't the commander of any troops; he wasn't a nobleman of any kind. God had conferred on him the title of apostle, but that was his *only* title, and it had no relevance outside the church. Yet in [Acts 27](#), we see him taking charge of a situation in a hostile secular environment when other men—powerful men—proved unable to lead.

Paul was not (especially in this situation) a man of high position. He was, however, a man of great influence—a natural leader.

What we find in [Acts 27](#) is a very interesting situation. Paul was beginning the long journey from Caesarea to Rome, where he would be tried in the court of Caesar. He was to be transported in chains as a prisoner.

PAUL IN CAESAREA

Caesarea was the main Roman military outpost on the coast of Israel, directly west of Jerusalem and slightly north of the modern city of Tel Aviv. It was the chief port and jumping-off point for Roman officials during the Roman occupation of Israel. It was also the capital of the Judean province and home to the Roman procurators. This was where Pilate lived during the time of Christ. It was completely Roman in culture.

The apostle Paul had been brought to Caesarea as a prisoner. His life as a missionary and church planter appeared to be over. When he returned from his third missionary journey in [Acts 21:15-16](#), he returned to Jerusalem.

[Acts 21:15-16 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁵ “After these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem.

¹⁶ *Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Manson of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge.”*

He had collected money from Gentile churches all over Asia to give to the church at Jerusalem because the needs of that church were so great.

In [Acts 21:11](#), the prophet Agabus had warned Paul that in Jerusalem he would be taken prisoner by the Jews and handed over to the Gentiles.

[Acts 21:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹ “And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, “This is what the Holy Spirit says: ‘In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’”