



Chapter Eleven

WHO IS FIT TO LEAD?

PLURALITY

PRIORITY

PURITY

The men chosen to assist the apostles in leadership also had to be “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” ([Acts 6:3](#)).

[Acts 6:3 \(NASB\)](#)

³“Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.”

That means they had to be *controlled* by the Holy Spirit (cf. [Ephesians 5:18](#)) and men of sober, righteous judgment.

[Ephesians 5:18 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.”

The men who were chosen all had Greek names, suggesting that they were predominantly if not exclusively from the Hellenist community. Nicolas was “a proselyte from Antioch” ([Acts 6:5](#))—a Gentile who had converted to Judaism before becoming a Christian.

[Acts 6:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵“The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.”

This was a loving expression of the early church’s unity. In all likelihood, most in the Jerusalem church were Hebrews, and yet they acknowledged the godly leadership of their Hellenistic brethren. Thus, a potential rift was healed, and the church got back to business with its priorities in order.

The seven men were set before the apostles, formally ordained, and put to work ([v. 6](#)).

[Acts 6:6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶“And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.”

The apostles devoted themselves anew to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

[Acts 6:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷“The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples



continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.”

The church’s zeal seems to have been invigorated and its influence expanded by the efficiency of the new organization. After all, it gave the apostles new freedom to do what they were called to do. It unleashed the Word of God. No wonder growth increased exponentially. And the impact of the church’s evangelistic ministry reached right into the temple. A revival broke out among the priests. As a result, many of the very men who had been the most bitter opponents of Christ during His earthly ministry were converted to the Christian faith.

All of this underscores the supreme importance of having the right kind of leaders. Mere talent could never have such a powerful influence. This wasn’t about style or strategy or flowcharts. It was about choosing men of character to lead the people of God, so that the work of the ministry would get done in the right way, by the right people, devoted to the right priorities.

We have come back to our starting point. Leadership is all about *character*—honor, decency, integrity, faithfulness, holiness, moral purity, and other qualities like these.

All these virtues may be combined and summed up in one final statement.

This rounds out and perfectly summarizes every fundamental requirement of a true leader: *A leader is Christlike.*

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE #26

A LEADER IS CHRISTLIKE

The perfect model of true leadership, of course, is the Great Shepherd, Christ Himself. If that does not make you feel the least bit unworthy, you have missed the whole point. With Paul, we ought to say, **“Who is adequate for these things?”** ([2 Corinthians 2:16](#)).

2 Corinthians 2:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“To the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?”

We already know the answer: **“Our sufficiency is from God”** ([3:5](#)).

2 Corinthians 3:5 (NASB)

⁵“Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, **but our adequacy is from God.”**

PART 4

EPILOGUE

Chapter Twelve

THE MEASURE OF A LEADER'S SUCCESS

If we judged success by worldly standards, some might be inclined to assess Paul's leadership career as an abject failure and a bitter disappointment. In the closing days of his life, when Paul wrote [2 Timothy](#), Luke was virtually his only contact with the outside world ([2 Timothy 4:11](#)).

[2 Timothy 4:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹“Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.”

Paul was confined in a Roman dungeon, dreading the savage cold of coming winter ([2 Timothy 4:13, 21](#)), and without any hope of deliverance from the death sentence that had been imposed on him. He suffered because of the sadistic contempt of his enemies. He was even abandoned or disavowed by some of his closest friends. He wrote, “**This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me**” ([2 Timothy 1:15](#)).

“Asia” refers to Asia Minor, where Paul had focused his missionary work. Ephesus, where Timothy pastored, was the capital of that region. So, Paul wasn't telling Timothy anything Timothy didn't already know firsthand. In that time of fierce persecution, association with Paul had become so costly that all but a few of the apostle's own spiritual children had in effect disowned and abandoned him.

That's why people who see things superficially might think the end of Paul's life was tragic. At first glance, it might even seem as if his enemies had finally defeated him.

A failure? Actually, the apostle Paul was not a failure as a leader by any measure. His influence continues worldwide even today. By contrast, Nero, the corrupt but powerful Roman emperor who ordered Paul's death, is one of history's most despised figures. This is yet another reminder that *influence* is the true test of a person's leadership, not power or position per se. In fact, a careful look at how Paul's life and ministry came to an end can teach us a lot about how to gauge the success or failure of a leader.