
Theme: “The Process of Supervised Training”

**“Skills Necessary for
Leadership Accountability”**

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INTRODUCTION

Church leaders are expected to be able to lead and manage in ways that motivate individuals to accomplish their God-given goals and vision. In order for ministers to serve with responsibility and integrity, they must develop and demonstrate skills of accountability and credibility.

Accountability is about how leaders earn the trust and confidence of their constituents. Make no mistake about it; people have very high expectations of their leaders. It seems that people today are more demanding and are harder to please than ever. However, people still want and need trustworthy leaders. They want leaders who hold to high ethical and moral standards and are genuinely respectful toward constituents.

In this age of instability, many people, even leaders themselves, have become cynical and afraid to trust. At times, we can even doubt our ability to make a difference in people’s lives and loyalty. Loyalty cannot be demanded by leaders but must be earned and given freely.

Spiritual leaders must constantly be reminded that to fail in relationships and to alienate people is to fail in that which is most vital to continuing ministry success. To fail

in relationships negates even the most spectacular gifts and abilities. Ministry cannot take place without a foundation of trusting relationships.

A warm and loving relationship, with a strong basis of credibility, is essential between spiritual leaders and their followers (I Corinthians 13:1-3). We must earn the love and respect of the congregation, which gives us the right to be heard and the right to lead.

In Kouzes and Posner's book, *Credibility, How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), they identify the key characteristics of admired leaders. These characteristics are as follows (in order of rank):

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Honest | 11. Dependable |
| 2. Forward-looking | 12. Cooperative |
| 3. Inspiring | 13. Imaginative |
| 4. Competent | 14. Caring |
| 5. Fair-Minded | 15. Mature |
| 6. Supportive | 16. Determined |
| 7. Broad-minded | 17. Ambitious |
| 8. Intelligent | 18. Loyal |
| 9. Straightforward | 19. Self-centered |
| 10. Courageous | 20. Independent |

“In virtually every survey we conducted, honest was selected more often than any other leadership characteristic. Honesty is absolutely essential to leadership” (Kouzes and Posner).

In assessing the believability of a source of information, researchers typically use the three criteria of trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism as a basis to rate the credibility of a source of information. Above all else, we want leaders who are credible and accountable. We want leaders who are believable and honest. It has been said,

“Leadership is getting others to want to do something that you are convinced should be done.” People follow leaders because they respect and trust them.

Maintaining credibility requires tenacity and persistence. Admired leaders manifest humility, admit mistakes, and learn from their experiences. Leaders tend to be optimistic and demonstrate faith in the future. Successful leaders demonstrate or model credible and accountable behaviors.

I. BEHAVIORS MODELED BY CREDIBLE LEADERS

As role models, leaders tend to focus on the following five (5) practices:

1. **Manifest** courage and faith. Leaders are teachable and courageous. They learn from life and from experiences. They take risks and try innovative ideas.
2. **Inspire** a vision and a purpose. Leaders must have passion and an internal fire driving them forward. They must be able to share that mission/vision/purpose and inspire others to follow.
3. **Motivate** and **empower** passionate commitment. The secret of motivating others is providing them with hope and a positive expectancy. People need leaders who will build their faith and optimism about the future. A Christian motivator must develop problem-solving techniques and affirmation skills to verbally encourage and guide people through the challenging situations of life.

Apathy and non-participation by Christians are the curse of the church today. So many church members are uninformed and unmotivated.

The job of leaders is to energize ordinary people so that they will grow and discover their full potential.

Motivating Christian maturity and leadership potential in others requires that mentors model:

- A **selfless commitment** to the vision – Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.” Leaders do not live for self, they put God first.
 - **Discipline** necessary to achieve the right priorities – Leadership demands singleness of purpose fueled by a sense of urgency for advancing God’s kingdom.
 - **Courage** to trust and obey – Courage and integrity of character are the fundamental attributes of great leaders.
 - **Sensitivity** to the leading of the Holy Spirit – Leaders cannot afford to be deaf to Heaven. Training and planning are great. Developing our mind is essential. But ultimately we walk by faith and not by sight. There is a supernatural dimension to leadership and it comes our way by remaining sensitive and open to the Holy Spirit.
4. **Point** people in the right direction. Leaders who are role models must pay close attention to what they really believe is important. Mature leaders will frequently engage in healthy self-evaluation and self-examination. They want to model the highest possible level of integrity, fair-mindedness, and spirituality.

Leaders must not manifest a critical or unforgiving spirit. They must not turn people with opposing views into adversaries or enemies. Leaders must temper their judgmental opinions and realize how hypocritical it is to find fault with others while remaining blind to their own shortcomings.

5. **Multiply** by training and developing emerging new leaders. The most strategic and fruitful work of a minister is to train and trust reliable people and encourage them to develop their spiritual potential.

People are drawn to a leader who is compassionate, a leader who responds to rejection or criticism with a constant will to love and help people. R. Lamar Vest said, “The mark of a true spiritual leader is how he/she treats enemies/critics.”

Reproducing leaders requires that we:

- Look for the best in others
- Believe in the potential for growth and improvement
- Demonstrate confidence in people
- Maintain open communication
- Seek honest feedback
- Set high but achievable standards or goals
- Focus more on “being” rather than on “doing”
- Model holiness of life

The principles of integrity demand that we, as Christians, work at building one another up rather than tearing each other down by being judgmental, critical, or hypocritical.

II. SEVEN QUALITIES OF PEOPLE THAT GOD CAN USE

A leader must be above reproach, blameless, holy, and trustworthy.

Qualities of people that God can use are as follows:

1. People who have but one great purpose in life
2. People who by God's grace have removed every hindrance from their life
3. People who have placed themselves absolutely at God's disposal
4. People who have learned how to prevail in prayer
5. People who are students of the Word
6. People who have a vital, living message for a lost world
7. People of faith that expect results and work in the anointing of the Holy Spirit

III. TWELVE CHARACTERISTIC OF STRONG TRUST-BUILDERS

The legacy of accountable and trustworthy leadership is in trouble around the world. The crisis is not one of competence but of character. Leadership is a distinctly moral calling, which demands trust and accountable behavior.

Many people today are like the painting by Pieter Bruegel (1568) of "The Parable of the Blind." Bruegel's painting is a tragic image of the blind leading the blind.

Much of the leadership that dominates our modern institutions today has left people self-absorbed, withdrawn, bitter, and distrustful. The problem is not

about mental weaknesses but about moral frailties. There is a deepening leadership crisis that has shattered a lot of trust within the Christian church. We are graphically reminded that character does matter and leaders must seek to build trust. Let's look at twelve (12) characteristics of strong trust-builders:

1. **They keep promises** – whether to clients, colleagues, or children. You can rely on them to do what they said they would do.
2. **They tell the truth** – even when it may be painful or when it may be to their disadvantage.
3. **They are quick to apologize when they do something wrong** – they sincerely regret doing wrong to others.
4. **They are good listeners** – they listen at least as much as they talk.
5. **They generously praise people** – they are constantly looking for what others do right and commenting on it.
6. **They willingly cooperate with their colleagues** – they are more interested in achieving good results than in who will get the credit.
7. **They strive to understand how others feel** – they are sensitive and empathetic to other people's feelings.
8. **They live out selfless character** - they look out for other people's interests, not just their own.
9. **They keep the faith and fight for honesty** - they are fair in their dealings with everyone.
10. **They are tenaciously focused on their objectives** – they clarify their intentions so others will understand their actions.

11. **They handle privilege and responsibility with great care** – they seek input on issues from the people who will be affected by their decisions or actions.
12. **They invest in the lives of followers** – they are genuinely interested in other people.

IV. KEY SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL ACCOUNTABILITY

The way we manage our life, resources, and relationships determine the success of our life and ministry. Proper management of our life and relationships requires that we be trustworthy and loyal. The negative side of managing relationships is the manipulation of people. The opposite of manipulation is something like actualization. Actualizing is wise management of our life and our work with others so that we can be all we can be! In managing and actualizing, we exercise extreme discipline, self-control, honesty, accountability, and diligence to reach our potential as God works in us by His power.

The key to success in our ministry is learning how to wisely manage our life and priorities; leaders must know the skills necessary for leadership accountability. To be accountable is to be answerable to an authority outside of ourselves . It is to submit to a designated authority for the purpose of counsel, evaluation, and responsibility with regard to our attitudes and relationships.

Skill 1 – Trustworthiness

The first key for managing accountability is trustworthiness. In order to be a spiritual leader, we must practice spiritual shrewdness and wise stewardship of all our resources, especially our relationships.

Leaders are able to inspire trust and establish meaningful relationships when they demonstrate their loyalty and reliability. These qualities multiply in us as we successfully face adversity and challenging experiences.

We trust people who prove to us their honesty and stability in the face of adversity. We trust people who maintain perspective and clarity under pressure. Without the quality of trustworthiness, we will fail in leadership even though we have high intelligence, a compelling personality, great ambition, and high energy.

Leadership responsibility should never be given to those who have not previously proven themselves trustworthy with material possessions. Only people who manage worldly resources can faithfully handle responsibility for the care of souls. We must see ourselves as stewards of what we have, not owners. Jesus taught that we cannot be a servant of the kingdom if we are devoted to our own self-interest. The critical question is, “What determines how I invest my life?” Our view of reality is one important factor that determines how we invest our life. Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

Skill 2 – Servanthood

Some ministers dream of fame and achieving greatness, as did Christ’s disciples. Jesus gave the twelve a lecture on kingdom leadership by repeating that greatness is directly related to service, not status; to responsibility, not privilege. Jesus said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

Following are several points about leadership and accountable servanthood:

1. Taking advantage of opportunities without regard for the consequences of our actions or for the principles of Scripture blinds us to the perils of our reckless disregard.
2. Serving others is not to be viewed as a stepping-stone to great power and position.
3. True servanthood is an act of love, totally devoid of selfish striving toward personal goals.
4. Leadership in the kingdom is fundamentally different than leadership in the world.
5. Spiritual leadership is granted for the purpose of serving, not for personal benefit.

Skill 3 – Lifestyle Management

Managing our life will require many mid-course corrections. Ministers must always work at being the same person in the home and the office as they are in the pulpit. As an intern on the pastoral staff of your supervising church, you will see how difficult it is to have enough time to accomplish all of the important tasks of each week. You will see your supervisor under pressure to be all things to all people. You will see him/her being criticized for not doing enough or for not being readily accessible to the congregation at all times. Think of all the demands on a pastor's time:

- visitation
- study
- sermon preparation
- staff meetings
- appointments
- counseling sessions
- letter writing
- bulletins
- financial reports
- state and district responsibilities
- community activities
- spouse and children
- other family members

In addition to all the above, a supervising pastor is expected to mentor lay leaders, work with church staff, and supervise an intern. A mentoring/training philosophy calls for us to invest our life in a few people at a time. Every supervising pastor will get criticized by people who will not understand why he/she spends so much time mentoring key lay leaders, building staff unity, and training an intern.

Those of us in leadership with the internship program realize that one of our great challenges is to match interns with supervising pastors who are committed to train others. Not every pastor is dedicated to or even understands the process necessary to train leaders. Some pastors accept the responsibility of a supervising pastor even though they are either not willing or are not prepared to spend time investing in the training and developing of interns.

Sometimes we find that we have an intern enrolled in the program who does not understand the training process of an internship. This type of intern may present a great problem for the supervising pastor for various reasons, such as:

- The intern is unteachable.
- The intern resents doing MIP and is uncooperative.
- The intern has a personality disorder or character flaw.
- The intern has a problem with areas such as anger, resentment, inferiority, addictions, authority, accountability, etc.

This third skill requires a high level of cooperation and dedication between both the intern and the supervising pastor. Managing emotions, attitudes, and lifestyles is a vital part of the process and is the responsibility of everyone involved.

Skill 4 – Perseverance

The difference between success and failure, between achievement and collapse, between having an impact on others for Christ and having no influence at all, comes down to just one word: perseverance. Our goal as disciples and as mentors is to learn to endure criticism, to overcome past hurts, to break bad habits, and to keep moving forward. In so doing, we will model perseverance before those who are watching our example. John Calvin wrote, “Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” Along this theme, in his book *The Rest of Your Life*, Patrick M. Morley said, “The secret of spiritual objectivity, growth, and wisdom is to seek the God who is and to carefully examine our own life.”

Skill 5 – Wisdom

Let us consider the following seven steps that lead to a wise life:

A. Study God's Character

We must study and seek to understand the character and attributes of God, so that we may know Him. Our initial impressions of God were shaped by our culture and environment. The very word “Father” is extremely loaded, the meaning so intertwined with our own human fathers. This may mean that during the internship program we must unload concepts from our culture and fill our minds with the correct doctrine of God.

B. Lead an Examined Life

In the training process, some interns will find that they need to make some radical changes. People tend at times to settle into a monotonous and unproductive routine that is hard to escape. It is like being in a deep rut. It has been said that a rut is simply a groove with both ends knocked out. If you are tired, weary, frustrated, or disappointed, you need to examine your life and get out of that rut.

An examined life is important because of the following:

- The heart is such a willing party to self-deceit. “The heart is deceitful above all things” (Jeremiah 17:9).
- The old sinful nature is a devious deceiver. “That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which

grows corrupt according to the deceitful lust” (Ephesians 4:22).

- People purposefully manipulate each other. “Wicked deceivers surround me” (Psalm 49:5). “Let no one deceive you with empty words” (Ephesians 5:6).
- Satan himself is the master deceiver. “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (Genesis 3:13). The antidote to deception is to lead an examined life, regularly reviewing our ways.

C. Maintain Private Devotions

Richard Dobbins, founder of Emerge Ministries says, “I have never seen one minister guilty of sexual sin who kept a daily personal devotion time.” In other words, in the days, weeks, and months leading up to their moral failure, their public ministry continued but their private watch before Christ stopped. Perhaps the difficulties arise when we **confuse** our walk with God and our work for God.

It is very deliberate that we require interns to maintain a time of personal devotions and prayer. Many ministers were never required to develop this discipline. Neither did they grow up in a family with daily devotions. The result is that many pastors only read the Bible for sermon preparation and only pray publicly and at meals. No wonder ministers’ lives are unmanageable or even out of control. The Bible also says, “Pray in the Spirit...” “Pray

without ceasing.” Daily private or family devotions are a requirement of MIP.

D. Think Critically

God wants us to learn to think critically. To do this, we add some things to our life and subtract some other things. God is at work in our life to build character. Our responsibility is to strive to have the mind of Christ, to think critically and spiritually.

If we are to think critically and spiritually, improve our attitude, build our self-esteem, stretch our potential, know our heart, and sharpen our perspective, then we must know ourselves.

We have already talked about the importance of leading a life of self-examination. Self-examination is not complete unless it includes a significant change in our thinking, our attitudes, our values, our assumptions, and our experiences.

The most revealing questions we can ask ourselves are concerning the identity of those matters about which we are passionate. Knowing our “passion points” reveals how we think and allows us to target areas for change.

Paul addresses this important transformation of thinking in Romans 12:2, where he said: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

Some modern translations or paraphrases of this Scripture read as follows:

- “But be ye transfigured in the renewing of your mind” (Henry Alford NT).
- “But by your new attitude of mind be transformed” (Edgar Goodspeed NT).
- “But by the new ideals that mold your minds continue to transform yourself” (Charles Williams NT).
- “But let God remold your minds from within” (JB Phillips NT).
- “But be transformed by the complete change that has come over your minds” (The 20th Century NT).

Let the prayer for spiritual renewal in Psalm 51:10 be our prayer: “Create in me a clean heart O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

Ministers, of all people, need a positive mind-set. “These minds of ours are like bank vaults awaiting our deposits. If we regularly deposit positive, encouraging, and uplifting thought, what we withdraw will be the same. And the interest paid will be joy” (Chuck Swindoll, *Laugh Again*). The secret lies in how we think and what we believe. As Paul wrote to the Philippians:

“And now brothers...let me say this one more thing: Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about” (Philippians 4:8 TLB).

E. Act Unselfishly

Jesus described Himself only one time in Scripture. It is recorded in Matthew 11:28-30:

“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (NKJV).

Did you catch the key words: “I am gentle and lowly in heart,” which might be best summed up in the one word unselfish? This is the most Christ-like attitude we can demonstrate. It involves being more interested in serving the needs of others than in having one’s own needs met.

An unselfish person is generous, thoughtful, and gentle. They have an unpretentious spirit and they are a servant-hearted leader. An unselfish Christian puts others first. They do not allow pride and ego to control their hearts. As Isaac Watts wrote early in the 18th century:

**When I survey the wondrous cross on
which the Prince of glory died, my richest
gain I count but loss, and pour contempt
on all my pride.”**

Today many people are selfish, egocentric, and unaware of their destructive attitude. In our selfish, grab-all-you-can-get society, the concept of cultivating an unselfish, servant-hearted attitude is almost a joke. Paul wrote a plea for unselfishness to his friends in Philippi:

“Do nothing from selfish or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself, do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interest of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).

There are three practical ways we can cultivate an unselfish attitude. First, do not be motivated by selfishness or conceit. Second, regard others as more important than ourself. This is not a natural trait but can be developed and improved. Third, do not focus on just our own needs but seek to be sensitive to the needs of others.

The only way a Christian can faithfully live an unselfish life is to have a good self-esteem, inner peace, positive faith, and a positive attitude. Paul urged the Philippians to: “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

Paul said that with this attitude Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8b). According to Hebrews 12:2, Christ Jesus, the Author and Perfector of faith, submitted Himself to the point of death (unselfish submission) “for the joy set before Him.” We are that joy – all who are saved by His grace.

Christ endured the cross, despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

“Therefore, also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name...” (Philippians 2:9).

A secret to a wise life is to humble oneself before God in unselfishness and He will exalt us.

F. Maintain Balance

Ministers, maybe more than others, look for role models, for examples of success. Admiration for a great person may inspire us, but it cannot enable us. God enables us by His Spirit and through the influence of holy people. We have the example of Christ and His power to live our life. As we take on the challenges of ministry, we need to keep things in balance.

1. Balancing Purpose and Power

“...Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work

in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13).

We (Christians/ministers) are to live out and carry out our faith correctly, and to work out our salvation. By doing so, we bring purpose to our existence. The ultimate goal or purpose of our life is “His good pleasure.” Our life is to be lived for God’s greater glory – not our own selfish desires.

We are not alone in our purpose. God is at work in us! He gives us strength and empowers our diligence. As He pours His power into us, we are to do the things that bring Him pleasure. His pleasure not ours, His will not ours, and His glory not ours is what makes life meaningful. In submitting to God’s will, we may be in danger of conflict, since most of us prefer to have our own way. Managing our life and ministry requires balancing purpose and power under submission to God.

2. Balancing Attitude and Action

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse

generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world..." (Philippians 2:14-15).

A bad attitude reveals itself from two sides: one is something we do alone – **grumble**; the other is something we do when we are with other people – **dispute**. Grumbling or disputing can be a real joy stealer and destroy our effectiveness as role models.

We need to manage our life and prove ourselves to be:

- Blameless – a pure life that is undefiled, un-hypocritical, and free of defect.
- Innocent – untainted in motive, possessing integrity.
- Above reproach – free of obvious guilt, free of blemish, and affirming.
- Lights in darkness – stars are luminaries that illuminate the darkness which is around them.

With the right attitude we can fulfill our calling, knowing that our labor for God is not in vain. Our action is not wasted effort when our attitude is right and we are walking in the spirit.

Managing to keep our life and ministry in balance is a battle. Old habits are hard to break. Self-discipline is hard to practice. However, a life lived under the dominion of self is both unsatisfying and unproductive. Perfect discipline is found in God alone, the source of order and balance, the epitome of self-control and holiness of life.

If we are to learn from mentors and from God how to manage and balance our life we must change our negative habits and negative thinking, which both lead to self-defeat. We must dethrone self and give God His rightful place over our life.

G. Maintain Accountability and Integrity

People succeed or fail in four ways.

- Spiritually
- Financially
- Morally
- Relationally

Do you know anyone who ever set out to fail on purpose? A reasonable person does not ruin his/her life on purpose. Yet people, even ministers, all around us fail. Why? They failed to possess the skills necessary to be accountable to God, to others, and to maintain the integrity of their character.

CONCLUSION

Many Christians lead anonymous spiritual lives. They seem to be able to float in and out of the church without having to be accountable for their life. Without accountability, we have no one to whom we must give an answer for our life. We have not given anyone permission to ask the hard questions. Some ministers' lives and activities become shrouded in ambiguity and independence.

For the training process to be complete, we must submit to being accountable, and manage so that our integrity is always protected.

These strategies and principles mark the concerns of a life filled with wisdom. The fruit of the Holy Spirit can only be manifested in us to the degree that we possess and use the spiritual skills of accountability and self-discipline. Our life can be one that is well managed, controlled, developed, and authentic impacting our world for Christ.