

“Biblical Leadership is Developed!”

Acts 11:19-30

Intro. – H. Norman Schwarzkopf gained notoriety as commander of U.S. Forces during the Persian Gulf War. In an interview with *INC.* magazine, the now deceased general revealed the following eleven principles:

Schwarzkopf on Leadership

1. **You must have clear goals** – must articulate these goals clearly to others.
2. **Give yourself a clear agenda** – every morning write down the five most important things to accomplish.
3. **Let people know where they stand.**
4. **What’s broken, fix now** – problems that aren’t dealt with lead to other problems.
5. **No repainting the flagpole** – make sure the work your people are doing is essential to the organization.
6. **Set high standards** – people won’t generally perform above expectations, so important to expect a lot.
7. **Lay the concept out** – but let people execute it.
8. **People come to work to succeed** – don’t operate on principle people have to be watched/supervised.
9. **Never lie**
10. **When in charge, take command** – some leaders put off deciding... Decide/change later if necessary...
11. **Do what’s right** – you always know the right thing to do, the hard part is doing it!

Be a leader! A lot more men present need to respond to that challenge. Why? Because of a critical leadership void in our world. Several years ago, *Time* magazine ran a featured article about America’s search for leadership. It profiled several potential political figures. The political leadership of today makes this article appear prophetic. This article concluded no one was capable of “inspiring the country...” Prophetic indeed!

What’s true of our secular world is even truer in the Church today. Talk about “back to basics” – there is nothing more basic than Biblical leadership in the Lord’s Church. The true *nature* and *direction* of any local church is wrapped up in her leadership. This is by God’s design and is the way the Lord intends for it to be.

Purpose: to understand the development of Biblical leadership is a team effort

Not everyone can lead, but I’m persuaded a lot more could lead than do. Saul, who later became known as Paul, serves in our text as an important example of dynamic, Biblical leadership. Looking at how Paul achieved this, we will see the application intended for this text:

I PREPARATION is God’s Part

- Illus. – preparation is important. Ask the speaker at a banquet. Came prepared *except* his false teeth. Mentioned this in panic guy next to him. Man pulled out set dentures said, “Try these.” Man did, but too small. Pulled out another pair... Pulled out 3rd pair and this time they fit. Grateful speaker, “Who would have dreamed that I’d be sitting by a dentist just when I needed one the most.” Man responded, “O, I’m not a dentist. I’m an undertaker.”
- God is constantly preparing men to be leaders in His Son’s Church

A. Saul Experienced Humility

1. On the road to Damascus..., Saul *blinded by a bright light* and told what to do...
2. Humbled by God – suddenly this self-righteous/assured, arrogant, man was submissive /teachable.

B. Saul Experienced Failure

1. After being immersed into Christ (i.e. after becoming a Christian), Saul tried preaching synagogue Damascus. Note: didn’t realize success; instead, had to escape through window at night!
2. Saul then goes to Jerusalem – disciples are afraid... Jews seek to murder him...
3. Saul experienced failure, not because ineffective speaker, but because content saying (not politically correct and certainly not popular...)
4. Illus. – it was said of a certain unpopular speaker one time: “Did his speech have a happy ending?” “Sure, everyone was glad when it was over.” Kind of what Saul was facing.
5. Robert Coleman: “If you can learn from your failures there is no end to what you can learn.” – certainly Saul could testify to the truth behind this statement.

C. Saul Experienced Obscurity

1. Galatians 2:1 – learned for fourteen years... Saul lived total obscurity. Why?
2. God often prepares His leaders in obscurity: e.g. Moses (40 yrs. wilderness)... Joseph (2 yrs. in a dungeon)... David (anointed King and lives months on the run)... Jesus, the Son of God, spent 30 yrs preparing for a three-year ministry.
3. J. Oswald Sanders: “Spiritual leadership does not develop best in the glare of publicity. Further, since God aims at quality in His chosen instruments, time is not an object with Him. We are always in a hurry but God isn’t.”
4. When Paul, under inspiration, outlined qualifications of an elder/pastor he wrote in 1 Timothy 3:6
“He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.”

Key to developing leaders – *preparation* (humility, failure, obscurity) is God’s part!

II **ENCOURAGEMENT** is the Church’s Part

- after God had prepared Saul, important to note the local church had a role as well = encouragement

A. Barnabas Encouraged Saul

1. His very name meant “son of encouragement”
2. When Saul returned to Jerusalem, church kept him at arm’s length, but Barnabas put his arms around him and said, “This man is for real!”
3. Acts 11, Barnabas is at it again – church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch help church there:
 - a. Antioch is 3rd largest city Roman Empire (500,000 plus)
 - b. Barnabas sought out Saul to do what? “encourage” and let Saul know “he was the man for the job at hand” -- the two then came to Antioch...
4. Acts 13:2 note the order of names, but in 13:42 it’s “Paul & Barnabas (13:9 Saul changed Paul)
 - a. from this point on it’s P & B = God’s providence opened up these roles for P & B...
 - b. Barnabas took on a new role willingly... ego removed and servant heart evident.
5. More people like Barnabas needed to *encourage* present/future leaders for Lord – needed here!...

B. The Church Encouraged Saul

1. For whole year taught *considerable numbers* = nothing encourages more than responsive people...
2. Agabus predicts severe famine Roman world, so special offering from Ch. at Antioch to brethren in Judea, note: *sending their gift to the elders by B and S*).
3. Acts 13:3 “ordained” for special missionary tour:
 - a. laid hands = NT 3 purposes: 1) healing... 2) Apostles imparting miraculous gifts HS... 3) setting aside for ministry, work &/or responsibility (i.e. ordination)...
 - b. note Antioch’s mission mindedness... sent their best forth
 - c. Illus. – neon sign flashing “Jesus Only” but 1st three letter burned out = flashing “US ONLY”
 - d. when local church is introverted... God’s hands are tied, He cannot bless!

If we’re Christ’s Church, there must be constant outreach to lost... = encouragement for leadership develop

III **COMMITMENT** is the Leader’s Part

- God had prepared Saul... church encouraged him.... now Saul committed to being a leader:
- 5 essential characteristics to being a leader which is one of the best summaries to commitment:

A. Saul Was GENUINE

1. You can’t fake sincerity long, especially in leadership role.
2. Sincere leaders doesn’t just mouth the words = they demonstrate the desired goal by example!
3. Illus. – Gen. G. Patton leading troops across Europe. Came to icy river. Men grumbled... no way swim across with backpacks... until Patton waded out with backpack & swam across and then back. Turned around said, “Now are you ready?”
4. People don’t need to be told as much as they need to be shown = leadership is all about *example!!*

B. Saul Was DECISIVE

1. Saul was not “wishy-washy” – i.e. he could make up his mind – Illus. C. Swindoll says people can’t make up their mind all have same favorite color = plaid
 2. Often people are indecisive because want total support and avoid all criticism – B. Cosby “I don’t know what the key to success is, but I am going to tell you the key to failure. The key to failure is trying to please everybody.”
 3. Saul demonstrated the opposite – understood James 1:8 “*he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*”
- C. Saul Was a DREAMER
1. Caused people to see what *could be* and not *what is* – learned that people responded to challenges
 2. Challenged people to stretch beyond the mundane – had “spiritual claustrophobia”... he saw the fields while unto harvest... said, “Here am I, send me!”
- D. Saul Was COMPASSIONATE
1. His association with Barnabas, the church and training in school of obscurity taught him to love people and not just himself...
 2. Impossible be effective leader if don’t care about people – Cavitt Roberts: “People don’t care how much you know if they don’t know how much you care.”
- E. Saul Was ENTHUSIASTIC
1. Saul was excited all his life “...*I have fought a good fight...*” – zeal essential to leadership = doesn’t mean loud, cheerleader type = does mean an intensity for TRUTH.
 2. Henry David Thoreau: “None are so old as those who have outlived enthusiasm.”
 3. Enthusiasm = 2 Greek words = en Theos = “in” “God” = if anyone ought to have fire and enthusiasm in their lives it ought to be Christians!

Conclusion: Two men were talking. First man said, “There’s nothing like getting up at five in the morning, taking a five-mile jog, and then a cold shower all before breakfast.” Second man asked, “How long have you been doing this?” First man responded, “I start tomorrow!”

The development of Biblical leadership is something that cannot and must not be put off. It is a combined effort put into motion by God. You see, God’s part is the *preparation*; church’s part is the *encouragement*; leader’s part is the *commitment*. Real leadership is not born or something that just happens. Real leadership is developed!