Lesson 5: The Trophies of a Leader

**Introduction**

It is definitely easier not to lead. Leadership always involves an increase in responsibility and making oneself a target – for admiration or criticism. One of the strongest reasons for leading in any context is the realisation that if you do not lead, something that you believe is important will not happen. We lead because we value something.

🡪 For thought:

“**Paradoxical Commandments of Leadership**”   
(*The Silent Revolution: Dynamic Leadership in the Student Council,* Kent M. Keith, 1968)

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| People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered. | *Love them anyway.* |
| If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. | *Do good anyway.* |
| If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies. | *Succeed anyway.* |
| The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. | *Do good anyway.* |
| Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. | *Be honest and frank anyway.* |
| The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds. | *Think big anyway.* |
| People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. | *Fight for a few underdogs anyway.* |
| What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. | *Build anyway.* |
| People really need help but may attack you if you do help them. | *Help people anyway.* |
| Give the world the best you have and you’ll get kicked in the teeth. | *Give the world the best you have anyway.* |
| The world is full of violence, injustice, starvation, disease, and environmental destruction. | *Have faith anyway.* |

There are two situations which cause concern when it comes to the willingness to lead. One is too much ambition for leadership, and the other is too little. You probably fall into one of those two categories!

It is easier to work with people who have too much ambition for leadership than those who have no ambition to lead. Those who have ambition to lead have seen something great and they desire it. They are motivated to take a hold of it. Perhaps they desire leadership for selfish reasons, or out of pride. Wrong reasons can be addressed, over time and through the sifting of motives. The long season of being overlooked for promotion is not just a test but something that addresses character.

On the other hand those who have no ambition to lead may be even more difficult to prepare for leadership. Some labour under the false-humility of saying: “I would not consider myself so bold as to seek leadership and the status or profile that goes with it.” In essence, they consider themselves unfit for leadership (or they wish people to think them unfit). However, in many cases what is really true is that such a person simply does not want to pay the price of taking responsibility. They mask their abdication as humility, but it is actually a kind of spiritual laziness.

Don’t think of yourself as too humble to be a leader, when you are actually just too lazy to lead. True leadership requires great humility. Perhaps humbling oneself to that truth would result in willingness to take the risk of stepping out to lead.

Leadership comes with responsibility and risk of failure but also very great honour and reward. In this lesson I want you to consider the honour of being a leader. We will use a few scriptural examples as case studies for leadership.

1. **Moses**

Moses was a reluctant leader, a humble man, even a flawed man, and yet God used him to deliverer of Israel out of the hand of Pharaoh.

*The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.****8****So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.****9****And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.****10****So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”*

***11****But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”*

***12****And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+3%3A7-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-1592a)*] will worship God on this mountain” (Exodus 3:7-12).*

Leadership, when part of God’s call on our lives, is a partnership with God. God uses one person to lead many to freedom. There are many situations in this world that call for Moses-type leaders. There is injustice and oppression and God still calls people to lead a cause for justice.

*“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?*

***7****Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?*

***8****Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=isaiah+58%3A6-11&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18795a)*] will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.*

***9****Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk,*

***10****and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.*

***11****The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail (Isaiah 58:6-11).*

The promise is God will be with you. What a privilege it is that we can join in the very mission of God. The person who responds to God’s call, who steps up and leads for the benefit of bringing others into freedom, will experience more of God!

1. **Gideon**

Gideon was also a reluctant leader. The story is a wonderful example of responding to the call to lead, even when feeling inadequate.

***11****The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites.****12****When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”*

***13****“Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”*

***14****The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?”*

***15****“Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”*

***16****The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive” (Judges 6:11-16).*

*Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh.****2****The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‘My own strength has saved me.’****3****Now announce to the army, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.*

***4****But the Lord said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will thin them out for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.”*

***5****So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, “Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.”****6****Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.*

***7****The Lord said to Gideon, “With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home” (Judges 7:1-7)*

***19****Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands.****20****The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!”****21****While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled (Judges 7:19-21).*

The benefit of leadership is great honour: “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon.”   
  
Consider the three hundred – with Gideon they saw the miracle of God first hand!

1. **Observations**

Leadership carries with it great reward in the task itself:

* Co-labouring with our Creator
* Changing the lives of others – a legacy
* Experiencing life with a sense of meaning and purpose
* Breaking, building, creating, setting the tone, establishing a culture

Furthermore, after the task of leading there is a crown.

🡪 Further texts for consideration:

*Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends! (Philippians 4:1).*

*For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?*

*Indeed, you are our glory and joy (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).*

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed:****2****Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve;****3****not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.****4****And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away (1 Peter 5:1-4).*

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.*

*Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever   
(1 Corinthians 9:24-25).*

*Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task (1 Timothy 3:1).*

*Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 3:13).*

**Conclusion**

These truths about leadership apply to every context where we are invited by God to lead. All authority comes from God, and he has limitless reserves to help us lead in our own lives, our marriages, our families, our workplaces.

In every case where God appoints someone to a task, there is an opportunity for blessing and increase. In a sense leadership is part of God’s mandate to mankind to be fruitful and rule over the earth (cf. Genesis 1:26-31) and implicit in this mandate is blessing from God.

In the light of this, it is reasonable to say everyone is called to lead in one sphere or another, and it would be unwise to shrink back from leadership opportunities wherever they exist. We are called to develop the whole of creation in whatever part we are given authority, and we are rewarded with blessing when we do so diligently, intentionally and wisely.

**Questions on Module One, Lesson Five**

1. Write a brief reflection on what you have learned during this course. Include your vision for developing your leadership in the future.

This question can be answered online at:

<http://www.tanacitychurch.mg/foundations-of-leadership.html>

Alternatively, write your name and answer the question on this page.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Answer: