

2. A Servant Who Leads by Godly Character

Since a godly servant leader is one who leads others rather than driving them, people will only follow him if they see godly character in his or her life. A person can deceive others by being one thing when others are around and something else when he is alone. However, a servant who leads by godly character demonstrates the same character when only God is watching as he does when other people are watching. It is this consistency of character, whether alone or with others, that causes others to look to him for leadership.

We will look at five levels of leadership in the move from worldly leadership to godly leadership. As we do this, you will see that godly character has a greater impact at each level because we are moving from being a driver to a servant who leads. Notice the five levels as we move down in our leadership and become a servant who leads:

Power or position ***Rights***

People follow you because they have to.

“You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.” - Mark 10:42

Production ***Results***

People follow you because of what you have done for the organization.

“For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.” - Galatians 1:13-14

Permission ***Relationships***

People follow you because they want to.

“From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, ‘Will you also go away?’ Then Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’” - John 6:66-68

Personal development ***Reproduction***

People follow you because of what you have done for their development.

“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to be great among you shall be your servant.” - Mark 10:44

Personhood ***Respect***

People follow you because of who you are and what you represent.

“And whoever of you desires to be great shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” - Mark 10:44-45

As we grow in integrity and godly character, we are becoming more like Christ. This means that we also begin to lead more like Christ. Because He humbled Himself and became obedient unto

death, even the death of the cross, the disciples chose to follow Christ even when it meant death for them. When threatened by the religious leaders, we see the answer of Peter and the other apostles, in Acts 5:29. “But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’” After the religious leaders beat them, Acts 5:41 says, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” The apostles followed the example of Christ because of their respect for Him.

Paul and Silas showed a similar attitude, in Acts 16:22-25. “Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” Paul and Silas could sing hymns of praise, because they were depending on Christ and following His example.

The example of Paul and Silas caused others to follow their example. Later that night, we read, in Acts 16:30-32, “And he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.” The jailer saw, and heard, the example of Paul and Silas in their suffering and realized that their lives were different. As a result, he and his entire family were drawn to Christ that night. The Lord used their godly character to draw this entire family to Christ.

In the same way, the Lord uses our character to draw others to Himself. However, we need to realize that some will rebel before they come to Christ. That was true of Paul. In Acts 6:9-7:60, Saul was one of the leaders of those who opposed the preaching of Stephen. Acts 7:59-8:1 tell us, “And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”

The only way Saul could resist the impact of the character of Stephen was to try and show that he was the exception by persecuting the entire church. Instead of destroying the church, the Lord used the character of Stephen, and the other Christians, to draw Saul to Himself. Stephen became a servant who was obedient to death, because he was willing to follow the example of Christ. Later, Paul followed that same example. Here, we see the power of godly character to transform the lives of others.

In Acts 27, we see another example of how Paul led by his character. In that chapter, Paul was a prisoner on his way to Rome. In verses 23-25, Paul said, “‘For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, “Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.” Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.’” Paul was a prisoner with

no authority but he spoke for the Lord.

Later, before morning came, Paul told the centurion and soldiers, in Acts 27:30-32, “‘Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.’ Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.” Here, we see an example of a prisoner leading his guards because of his godly character.

A few minutes later, he became the leader to all two hundred and seventy-six people on board because of his godly character. Acts 27:33-36 tell us, “And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, ‘Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.’ And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.” He led them by his example, because they respected his character.

In the same way, godly character will impact people because they will follow us because of what we are and who we represent. They will be able to recognize that we are not seeking power but rather are seeking to help them become more effective in their lives and in their service for the Lord. Leadership through godly character is very powerful. The disciples were willing to die for Christ, because they had seen Him die for them. When people see that we are seeking the Lord’s best for them, we will have a great impact on their lives.

People are watching your life. They are deciding whether they want to follow Christ, because they see the impact that Christ has had in your life. If they see little difference from the lives of the people who are not Christians, your life will have little or no impact for Christ. However, if they see that Christ has changed you to a person who is motivated by the love of Christ, you will lead them by your godly character. May the Lord richly bless you, as you lead others through godly character.