

A Harvest of Character Qualities

Written by Bob Stone

Let's try to deduce from Scripture some of the specific character qualities that all disciples/leaders should have growing in their life.

The tendency when describing a leader is to look at outward appearances, actions, or gifts. It is interesting to note, however, that outward manifestations are rarely if ever mentioned in choosing leaders in the early church. For instance, the passages dealing with elders and deacons focuses on character qualities. Let's look then at specific spiritual qualities that need to be developed in maturing Christians and leaders.

The following passages list the qualities needed for all leaders. We'll first record the qualities found in these passages, and then add a list of character qualities that can be deduced from our observation of men and women God has used in leadership.

Lists of Qualities

Titus 1:5-9

A leader is to be:

- blameless
- devoted exclusively to their mate, if married
- a model to their family so that their children believe and are not wild or disobedient
- not overbearing
- able to handle anger correctly—not quick tempered
- not given to drunkenness
- not violent
- not greedy—not pursuing dishonest gain
- hospitable
- a lover of goodness
- self-controlled
- upright
- holy
- disciplined
- holding firmly to the Word
- able to encourage others by sound doctrine
- capable of refuting error

Questions:

1. Does the elder have these qualities prior to selection/recognition, or is he to strive

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for them?

2. What would be the impact of their leadership if they didn't have many of these qualities?

3. Why is it essential a leader be capable of refuting error? (See vv. 10-16)

1 Timothy 3:2-13

A leader is to be (have):

- respectable
- able to teach
- gentle
- not quarrelsome
- not a lover of money
- able to manage his family well, children obey with respect
- mature—not a recent convert
- a good public image and reputation
- worthy of respect
- sincere
- honest in finances—not pursuing dishonest gain
- holding to the truth with a clear conscience
- must be tested
- in control of the tongue—not a malicious talker
- temperate in everything
- trustworthy in everything

Questions:

1. From this passage, what would be the result if a leader did not have these qualities? (See vv. 5, 6b,7b)

2. Why is it that a potential leader should be tested? (v. 10) How should they be tested? How will they know the testing is completed?

3. What is the result of serving well? (v. 13—explain)

4. Why is it good that a person set his heart on being an overseer? (v. 1b)

1 Peter 5:1-5

A leader must:

- be shepherds of flock under their care
- serve as overseer not because they must, but willingly
- not be greedy for money, but eager to serve
- not lord it over others, but be an example

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Questions:

1. What will be the reward for exemplary service?
2. What does God want you to be?

2 Peter 1:5-9

A leader will make every effort to add to their faith:

- goodness
- knowledge
- self-control
- perseverance
- godliness
- brotherly kindness
- love

Questions:

1. What will these qualities do for the one who possesses them? (v. 8)
2. What is revealed about the person who does not have these qualities? (v. 9)

Colossians 3:12

A leader/disciple will clothe himself/herself with:

- compassion
- kindness
- humility
- gentleness
- patience
- a willingness to bear with another
- forgiveness
- love

Questions:

1. Who is qualified and able to clothe themselves with these qualities? (v. 12a)

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2. How does love bind all these qualities together?

"The Christian leader is, quite simply, the person who by example, is able to lead others to live lives that reflect kingdom values. Unfortunately, we have been misled to believe that the chief word in the phrase 'Christian leader' is leader, whereas it is actually Christian." Gordon Aeschliman, Leadership In the 21st Century, InterVarsity Press, pp. 11-12.

Galatians 5:22-26

A leader will show the fruit of the Spirit:

- love
- joy
- peace
- patience
- kindness
- goodness
- faithfulness
- gentleness
- self-control

Questions:

1. Those who have the fruit of the Spirit in their life have taken a specific step. What is it? (v. 24)
2. What will keep the fruit of the Spirit in our lives? (v. 25)
3. What might cause us to inhibit the fruit of the Spirit in us? (vv. 26,16-17)

Proverbs 2:1-5

A leader is to have a teachable spirit. That means they'll be:

- receptive to God's Word. 2:1a
- storing up commandments. 2:1b
- attentive to wisdom. 2:2a
- applying the heart to understanding God's Word. 2:2b
- crying out for insight. 2:3a
- raising their voice for understanding. 2:3b
- seeking wisdom like it was silver. 2:4

Question:

What will be the result if these qualities are evidenced in an individual? vv. 5-22

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□ Timothy 4:12-16

A leader will set an example:

- in speech
- in life
- in love
- in faith
- in purity

A leader will be devoted:

- to the reading of Scripture
- to teaching it to others

A leader will:

- not neglect his giftedness.
- be diligent in all he does.
- watch both life and doctrine.

Question:

Why does a leader need these qualities? Look for the answers in vv. 15,16b.

1 Timothy 6:9-12

A leader, according to verse 11, will pursue:

- righteousness
- godliness
- endurance
- love
- faith
- gentleness

A leader will fight the good fight of faith—v. 12a.

A leader will claim his/her calling in eternity—v. 12b.

Questions:

1. What are we to flee before we can pursue these qualities? (See vv. 9-10)
2. What can we be pierced with if we pursue riches instead of character? (See v. 10b)

Lists of Qualities Compiled by Observing Godly People

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A leader will need to develop the following qualities:

- fight and drive—Acts 20:24; Phil. 3:4
- reliability—2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Kings 20:39-40
- resourcefulness—Judges 3:31
- adaptability/flexibility—1 Cor. 9:19-23; Acts 16:6-10
- enthusiasm—Ps. 119:10; Eccl. 9:10; Col. 3:23-24;
- good work habits—Col. 3:22-25; Eph. 6:5-9
- alertness—Prov. 24:30-32
- initiative—Acts 3:1-7
- confidence—Heb. 4:16; 2 Cor. 5:6-8; Heb. 6:9
- stability—Eph. 4:14-16; Prov. 29:4

A leader will be a pace setter in:

- surrendering—Rom. 12:1
- separation—2 Peter 3:14
- motivation, fear and love—2 Cor. 5:11-14
- wisdom—James 1:5; Prov. 1-9
- appreciation—Rom. 16

A leader will seek to develop:

- a comprehensive viewpoint—reaching beyond one's niche to see the big picture—Acts 1:8
- competence—Mark 7:37; Eph. 6:6
- consistency—I Tim. 4:15-16

Project

1. What quality does Jesus command that we evidence in our life in John 15:9-17?
2. From John 15:1-10, how is the fruit of love developed in us?

v. 2b

v. 3

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vv. 4-5

v. 7b

v. 7c

v. 9b

v. 10

3. From the above Scriptures, make a list of the ways love and other qualities might be developed in you.

4. From James 1:2-3, how is the quality of perseverance developed in us?

5. What if a person fails the test of 1 Tim. 3:10? Does this mean they are not fit for leadership? Possible answers: The apostle Paul would say a failure disqualifies a person for leadership. (See Acts 15:36-39a.) The apostle Barnabas would say a failure does not disqualify a person for leadership (Acts 15:39).

6. Who was right regarding Mark—Paul or Barnabas? (See 2 Tim. 4:11.)

7. What relationships/family members might have had an effect on Mark's life? (See Acts 12:12; Col. 4:10; Philemon 1:24; 1 Pet. 5:13.)

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8. What qualities did Barnabas have that may have made the difference in developing leadership in Mark? (See Acts 4:36; 11:22-26.)

9. Who made a way for Paul to have a greater ministry? (See Acts 11:25-26.)

10. What kinds of testing might cause a potential leader to be cut out of a leadership development track?

The test of the world—2 Tim. 2:9.

The test of false teaching—2 Tim. 2:16-18.

The test of a few things—Matt. 25:21, 23.

The testing of our faith—James 1:2-4.

The test of finances—Lk. 16:10-12.

The test of family—1 Tim. 3:4-5.

The test of truth or distortion—2 Cor. 4:2