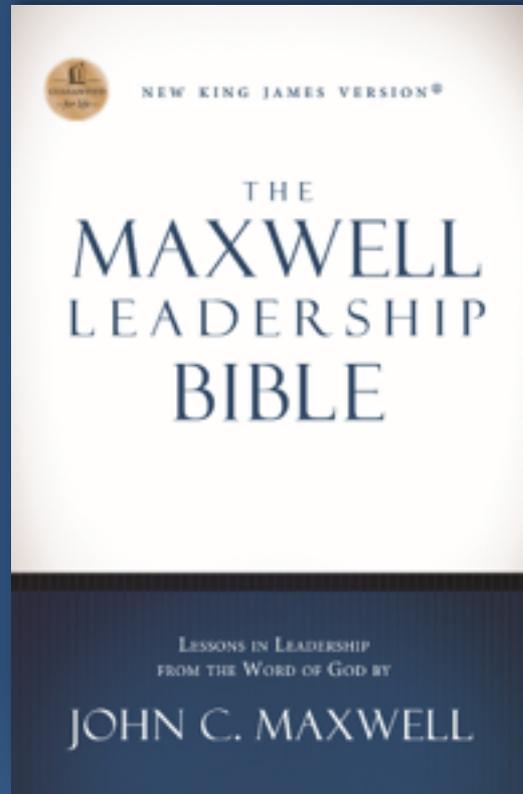


Leadership:

6 Characteristics of Biblical Leaders



Whether you are in a pastoral role, a teacher, or the leader of your family, these 6 qualities apply to you. These 6 readings from The Maxwell Leadership Bible will equip and encourage you as you lead.

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Day 1: Commitment: Four Characteristics of Those Who Complete a Task

Commitment comes before anything else in a leader's life. Because Nehemiah had it and drew it out of others, the people finished the wall in 52 days, despite many adversities. Their great accomplishment so thrilled Nehemiah that he wrote, "When all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things...they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God" (Neh. 6:16).

Leaders who complete a task possess at least four characteristics:

1. A compelling purpose: They make a great commitment to a great cause.
2. A clear perspective: They don't let fear cloud their view of the future.
3. A continual prayer: They pray about everything and gain God's favor.
4. A courageous persistence: They move ahead despite the odds.

Day 1: Scripture

So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

– Nehemiah 6:15–16 NKJV

Day 2: Demonstration + Proclamation = Credibility

Immediately following Pentecost, the Christian movement picked up steam. Two leaders, Peter and John, encountered a lame man on their way to the temple. When the name of Jesus healed the man, they immediately gained credibility to share the gospel. In other words, once they walked the walk, they attracted an audience when they talked.

Note how Acts 3 describes these early church leaders:

1. They faithfully did what they knew to do (v. 1).
2. They stopped and sensitively addressed needs (v. 3).
3. They had the courage to face problems (v. 4).
4. Others anticipated receiving solutions from them (v. 5).
5. They realistically admitted their lack of material resources (v.6).
6. They fearlessly used their God-given authority (v. 6).
7. They generously gave away their spiritual resources (v. 6).
8. They solved practical problems (vv. 7, 8).

Day 2: Scripture

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ² And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple;³ who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. ⁴ And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us."⁵ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising

God. ¹⁰ Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Preaching in Solomon's Portico

¹¹ Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. ¹² So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

¹⁷ "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. ²² For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. ²³ And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' ²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. ²⁵ You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' ²⁶ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

– Acts 3:1–26 NKJV

Day 3: Purpose: Paul Stayed on Mission, Even in Prison

Paul might have been forgiven had he chosen to take a little sabbatical as he sat in prison, awaiting his trial. Yet he used even this opportunity to advance the gospel (Phil. 1:12).

Paul was a leader who never drifted from his mission. He determined to leave his mark wherever he went. George Washington Carver wrote, “No individual has any right to come into the world and go out of it without leaving behind him distinct and legitimate reasons for having passed through it.”

How did Paul’s sense of purpose keep him in the battle as he sat in prison?
What did he learn behind bars?

Consider the following:

A purpose will motivate you.

A purpose will keep your priorities straight.

A purpose will develop your potential.

A purpose will give you power to live in the present.

A purpose will help you evaluate your progress.

Day 3: Scripture

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; ¹⁴ and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: ¹⁶ The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; ¹⁷ but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel.¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

–Philippians 1:12–18 NKJV

Day 4: Gifts: We Are Most Effective When We Lead from Our Gifts

Our leadership will always be most natural, most effective, and most influential when we lead from our gifts and strengths. Then it won't be forced, feel awkward, seem artificial, or copy someone else. Effective leadership occurs when we lead from our own identity.

Paul believed Timothy's leadership would grow strong when he remembered three truths:

1. His secure heritage (v. 5). Paul reminded Timothy of the spiritual foundation his family gave him.
2. His spiritual gift (v. 6). Paul reminded Timothy to stir up the gifts inside him and lead from those gifts.
3. His solid conviction (v. 7). Paul reminded Timothy that God didn't give him fear, but the tools to do the job.

Day 4: Scripture

When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. ⁶ Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

-2 Timothy 1: 5-7 NKJV

Day 5: Accountability: Leaders Will Endure a Stricter Judgement

James informs us that leaders and teachers will receive a stricter judgment than other believers when they stand before God. Why? Because of their greater influence.

When a follower makes a mistake, he affects only himself and perhaps his family. When a leader makes a mistake, he affects the many who follow.

The Law of E. F. Hutton reminds us that when the real leader speaks, people listen. This can be both good news and bad news, depending on whether the leader's words are worth listening to! God promises that those in positions of influence will give account for how they use that influence.

In one sense, God will be a spiritual accountant, the heavenly C.P.A., calling leaders to answer for how they used the resources He gave them. At the judgment seat of Christ we will be required to give an account for what we did with our lives and our influence.

Day 5: Scripture

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers,
knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.
– James 3:1 NKJV

Day 6: Self-Discipline: If You Can Tame the Tongue, You can Tame Anything

What power our words contain! James focuses on the little muscle inside our mouths, called the tongue, a little thing that dispenses both blessing and cursing. Leaders must pay close attention, for they communicate often and carry great influence when they speak. James lists four functions of the tongue:

Function One: to gauge (vv. 1, 2). The tongue is a spiritual meter. If we can bridle it, we can bridle the whole body. It becomes the gauge for our maturity. Our faith will never register higher than our words.

Function Two: to guide (vv. 3–5). The tongue is like a horse's bit, a ship's rudder, or kindling wood. It starts things in motion. If we can control it, we can guide our lives, just as a bit directs a horse or a rudder steers a ship.

Function Three: to gird (vv. 6–8). The tongue is powerful. Like a huge fire, it can ruin or bless our entire lives. This power was meant to send us down the right path, not to kill us.

Function Four: to guard (vv. 9–18). The tongue can reveal what sort of wisdom we harbor inside. A good tongue protects our integrity. James asks: Is yours a good guard or a bad one? Does it create peace or reveal hypocrisy?

Day 6: Scripture

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. ² For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. ³ Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. ⁴ Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. ⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

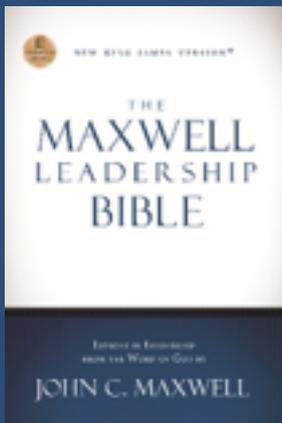
See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. ⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸ But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

Heavenly Versus Demonic Wisdom

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

– James 3:1–18 NKJV

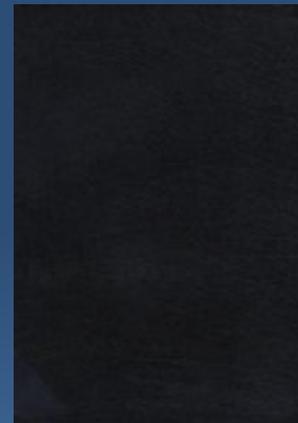
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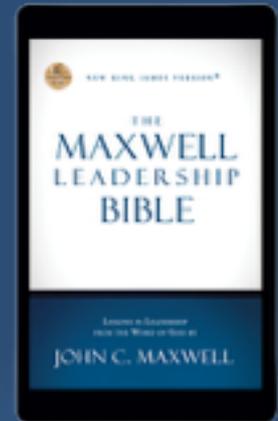
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