

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Christ announced the Great Commission on a mountain, and delegated leadership to each of us. He directed us to go, disciple, and teach all nations and all people. Being a part of the Kingdom of God involves being in leadership in some capacity, whether in your family or in another context. Just as one cannot opt out of the Great Commission, one cannot opt out of serving as a leader in the Kingdom.

There are many definitions and models of leadership. The noun form of leadership is never used positively in the Bible for Christians in position of authority. However, the verbal aspect is used positively when portraying the functions of leadership. At SROM, we believe the defining characteristic of leadership is servant-hood (John 13:1-7). Explained throughout the entirety of scripture and embodied in our Lord Jesus Christ, biblical leadership informs our walk of faith.

Called to a Higher Purpose

Christ said there was no greater gift than that a man would lay down his life for his brother (John 15:13). Christ set an example for us with His life. He gave up all He had in heaven, and eventually all He had here on earth for our benefit and redemption. For He made Himself poor so that through Him we may become rich (2 Corinthians 5:12). Jesus is God and King, and present when the universe was created yet let Himself be mocked, ridiculed, beaten, abused, and executed.

Christ was quite clear as to how we are called to live. “The first shall be last and the last shall be first” (Mark 10: 31) and “what you do to the least of these, you do to me” (Matthew 25:40). He said that no man may follow Him unless s/he picks up his/her cross daily (Luke 9:23). *By His words and His example, Christ challenges us to put others first and to lay down our lives for our fellow man.*

This is not an easy task; Christ knew that. He knew that in order for us to emulate Him we would have to undergo a metamorphosis, a redemption of the mind, spirit, and body. Christ gave us the goal and the standard, knowing the process that would get us there. We are asked to daily die to our flesh and our own selfish will so the Kingdom may be accomplished in us. John the Baptist knew that we must become less so that Christ may become more (John 3:30).

Heart of a Servant

God let Himself be made the fool so that He could show us how to love and serve. The heart of a servant is a heart of love. Christ served us because He loved us unfathomably. His request is that we learn how to do the same. We are God’s hands and feet on this Earth (Ephesians 4:16) and Christ said that the world would know His followers by their love (John 13:34-35). Is this true today? (Or any other time for that matter?) Do people say, ‘wow, those Christians, they just love, love, love?’

Most of us are poor at exemplifying unconditional love. Indeed, without God, no one can know or give real love. He is the author of love and the source of all things pure and holy (1 John 4:19). The only way we can reflect the love of Christ in a real way is to be so close to God's heart that our hearts have the same beat. We need to be so completely drained of ourselves that Christ is all that is left in us. Then people will see love as the Spirit overflows from our wellspring.

Servanthood and Leadership

At SROM we strive to instill in our staff and students that to serve Christ, we must serve one another. First, we believe in setting the example. By loving and serving as Christ did, others will see what a difference it makes in peoples' lives. Christ was an excellent teacher and knew that modeling was the best way to explain what He wanted from us. As He did, we are to do. In leading by example, expectations are clearly communicated and accountability is established. When the entire staff lives out servant leadership, we have the grounds on which to ask others to do the same.

Secondly, we believe in equipping people to be servant leaders. Tools for servant leadership range from helping a person know and understand the love God has for them (so they can share it), to foot-washings, to student-led days on a course. *Our ability to serve comes out of the wholeness of our heart. The capacity to serve comes out of our willingness to submit to the will of God. The energy to serve comes out of our choices to let go and lean completely on God for strength and provision.*

Remember, if someone needs a hammer, you give them no help by offering a jigsaw. Meet people where they are, speak to them in love, and ask God to help you see them through His eyes.

The third aspect of building up servant leaders is exhortation. It is a challenge for the flesh to die and an accomplishment when it does. We should encourage and support each other in our efforts. Major accomplishments should be celebrated, giving praise to God for His mercy and grace. Accordingly, we should honor those who serve us, recognize and thank them for their sacrifice. God sees what they do and it blesses Him, therefore it is proper and appropriate to say 'thank you' and bless a person who has blessed us.

The Kingdom vs. the World

Leadership in the world is vastly different from the leadership demonstrated in the Bible. The world teaches that power is the measure of a person and that the ability to control people is worthy of respect. But this is a perversion of the truth by Satan. The truth is that love is the measure of a man and how he serves others is a demonstration of that love.

There are leaders of evil and leaders of good. From Hitler to Gandhi, from Genghis Khan to Mother Teresa, the world has seen many of both. A person's leadership reflects their heart. If a person's heart is self-indulgent and self-seeking, their leadership will be about power, fame, and gluttony. However, if a person's heart is humble and giving, their leadership will edify and empower.

The world's leadership can be divided into two categories; self-centered and human-centered. Both are of the world and not of God. Self-centered leadership is power without accountability or restraint. Individuals seek to be beyond rules and

boundaries and to create their own. Human-centered leadership is about justifying man and believing that intellect and technology can save mankind. Individuals seek to make the world whole without God. The first worldly type of leadership is the spirit of rebellion; the second is the spirit of anti-Christ.

The truth is that only God can change peoples' hearts, only God can heal the world, and only by being the least can one become the greatest. Servant leadership is not self-centered or human-centered. It is Christ-centered. The desire to save everyone and solve all the problems, while well intended, would never accomplish what it wishes. Only by lowering oneself to a servant and looking to God as the source of all things can His Kingdom come and the world be transformed.

Leadership in the Kingdom

In scripture, the Kingdom of God is compared to many things. However, Kingdom metaphors involving leadership and authority center around God's people as an army, and the Kingdom as just that – a kingdom. America is a republic, and thinking in terms of kingdom requires a paradigm shift for many of us.

In a kingdom, all authority is delegated and relegated by the king. There is not authority inherent in any person or position, other than that of the royal family (and then the king has the authority to make changes). Like an army, people in a kingdom live in spheres of delegated authority. The Kingdom of God is the same, with Christ as the Head and King. However, unlike earthly kingdoms and armies, the way to be the greatest is to become the least. In Philippians 2: 1-11, Paul describes the heart of a leader in the Kingdom:

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing. Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross. Because of this, God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In the Kingdom of God, the way up is down, and the highest level is as a bond slave (James 1:1, Philippians 1:1). If we pray that we would decrease so that God would increase, then the posture that gives God the greatest glory is that of a slave: utterly dependent and wholly obedient. Such a thought will reveal what you truly believe about God's character and to what degree you will reflect Him in your leadership style. The following diagrams contrast the world's leadership model with leadership in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus' as the Servant Leader

There are many leaders in the bible, some of whom were better than others. Not every leader talked about in the bible did it well and not every good leader in the bible did well all the time. So when it comes to identifying true Godly leadership, Jesus is the one to look at. He is God incarnate, perfect in every way, and is the model for us in both large and small group leadership. Jesus led from a place of knowing who he as God's son. Jesus' example is one to be studied to gain insight and revelation on how to be a leader. Jesus' life manifested the Kingdom Leadership Model above. He came as a servant, was a steward of the people around him, and was a slave to the will of the Father, even unto death.

According to scripture, God gives three leadership capacities: Priest, Prophet, and King. Only these three roles carried authority before God. Jesus, being the fulfillment of the Law (Matthew 5:17), fulfilled his leadership duties in each of these three capacities. He demonstrated with both His life and His words that a leader is priest, prophet, and pastor (or shepherd king) in accordance with Deuteronomy 17:14 - 18:22. These three capacities exist, whether you are leading a large group or a small one.

Priest

Hebrews 7:20-26 calls Jesus our high priest, making intercession forever for us before the Father. The priestly dimension of leadership occurs in three categories: (1) standing before God for your students (interceding in prayer) before you stand before students for God; (2) offering of sacrifices (full surrender of our lives, praise and thanksgiving, people being won to Christ, being set apart by the Holy Spirit); and (3) spiritual training, counsel and information for students.

A person stepping into the fullness of the priesthood position usually goes through five stages (as identified by Hule Goddard):

Stand before the Lord until seeing him, you don't have a leg to stand on (contrite, as in Isaiah 57:15)

Receive your standing with God as a gift of grace, made possible by Christ

Stand in worship, fixed upon the Lord himself: for his word, his vision, be with God, listening

Stand in intercession for those you are called to love and serve

Stand before the people for Jesus

One leads from this place with a servant's heart through humility and compassion. God sees what is done in secret and honors that (Matthew 6:6). This aspect of leadership is about the motivations of the heart. Is your heart pure towards the people you are leading or working with selfish ambition? Moving into the fullness of the priesthood in the method described above will purify your motivations and reveal the true intentions of your heart.

Prophet

In the Bible, the prophet's central role was to stand in the counsel of the Lord and to speak His Word to His people (Jeremiah 23:16-29). Jesus' disciples regarded Him as a prophet (Luke 24:19), as did crowds (Mark 6:15 and 8:28). In his book, Spiritual Leadership, J. Oswald Sanders explains that "spiritual leadership requires Spirit-filled people. Other qualities are important; to be Spirit-filled is indispensable. ...And each believer has as much of the Spirit's presence as he or she will ever need. Our task it to remain yielded to Him." In regards to small or large group leadership, SROM defines prophetic as seeing what others don't see, and standing in the gap between the 'now' and the 'not yet' (Ezekiel

22:30). Standing in the gap means to contend in the Spirit on behalf of someone or something. This can be for a person, group, or organization. Discernment is prophetic in everyday life. As a leader, one should be seeking discernment from God to see people as He sees them. The question that usually leads to strife is what to do with that discernment. First, it is necessary that leaders empower and pour love into areas of potential strength. A leader can speak to areas of growth only when God gives permission (Jeremiah 1:7).

The prophetic also stands between the 'now' and the 'future', enabled by God to see how the two connect. Consequently, leading in the capacity of the prophetic also includes planning and preparing; know what may be coming and empower and building the capacity to exist there. It is the act of extending the tent stakes in order to be able to receive what the Lord has to give (1 Chronicles 4:9-10).

This aspect of leadership is about positioning yourself to receive from God in order to give to people. Leading in this capacity with a servant's heart involves intimacy with God, patience, stillness and trust. Can God trust you to speak when you should and to be silent and patient when you should? A servant leader loves people with a strong, steadfast, persevering love that knows the value of freedom and truth and is not shaken by the journey from the 'now' to the 'not yet.'

It is also important to remember that leaders need to be guarded against speaking supposed prophetic words of truth to students that come from you rather than God. People who presume to speak a prophetic word in God's name that He has not commanded were to be put to death (Deuteronomy 18:20).

Shepherd King

Jesus was clearly understood as a king in the New Testament. While the world's definition of a leader does not contain the first two components, it does contain the role of king, or in Christ's example, shepherd king. This is the place where most of us have experienced abuse. While immaturity will cause wounds in the position as prophet, an un-submitted life will cause wounds and consequently character flaws in a leader's ability to shepherd appropriately. Our own un-submitted and wounded hearts will act in ways that will perpetuate the problem. If we experienced un-just kings we have a tendency to rebel. If we experience inadequate and inept kings we take on illegal authority and develop unhealthy behavior patterns. We each have experienced both unjust and inept kings in our life, so we have the capacity in our flesh to rebel or develop unhealthy behaviors. Only by working through the healing process in our own lives will we be able to be better leaders.

According to the bible, the duties of a shepherd king, according to the Bible, are to plan, strategize, establish accountability, and have compassion for people. Because we live in a democracy, we may be unfamiliar with the role of a king, and even in biblical times, Jesus turned this paradigm on its head (literally). A king sets the direction, inspires, and holds people accountable for their actions:

"It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left." (Deuteronomy 17:19-20).

Kingly leadership is about authority and how that is wielded over the people. A servant leader's heart should always hold the people in higher regard than himself and understands that authority is not something to be regarded flippantly or with pride, but taken hold of soberly and with the fear of the Lord. Like Aragon in the Lord of the Rings, we need to acknowledge that within us is the capacity to fail and to fall. Only by humility, the abounding grace of God, the strength and provision of His mantle, and accountability among SROM instructor teams and staff can we lead as servant shepherd kings in righteousness.

The Role of Leadership in the Kingdom

The state of our heart toward leadership and authority will determine what kind of leader we will be and how those we lead will respond to us. Our flesh can greatly influence how we live out the role of leader, so will our misaligned paradigms of what a good leader looks like. We have all been under various styles of leadership. Some of them have been good and godly, although not perfect. Other leaders may have been abusive. All of us have things we wished had been done differently by the leadership we have been under. Our flesh responses create places in our hearts which can manifest ungodly leadership characteristics. The good news is that Christ can redeem our hearts and bring our personalities into alignment with His own. As we approach leadership roles, it is important to know which way your flesh tends to stray.

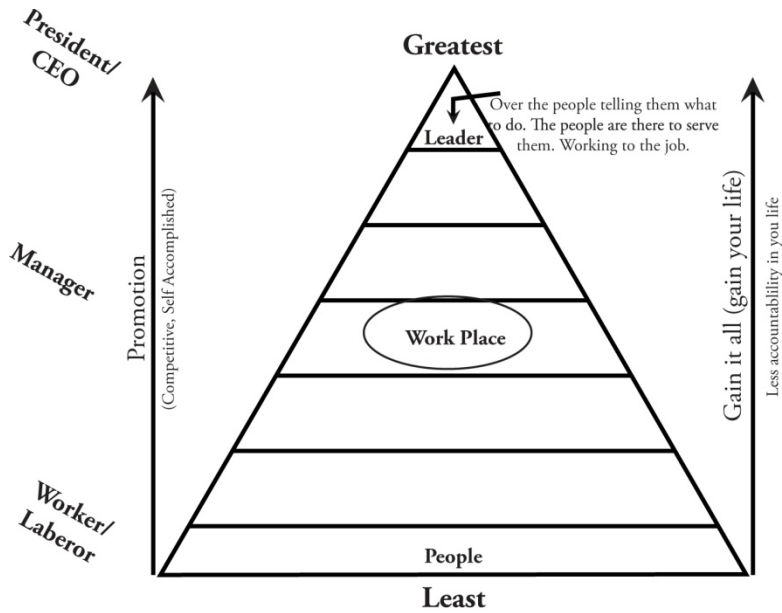
The purpose of leadership is not to be 'in charge' but is always to empower and love (1 Corinthians 13). This includes tough love and setting boundaries, and many of us are not comfortable with either of those roles. We have experienced poor kingship and so we tend to react in one of two ways: we rebel or become enablers. Scripture calls authority issues rebellion. At its heart, and whether passive, aggressive, or both, the rejection of authority is rebellion. Scripture says rebellion is as the form of witchcraft.

But Samuel replied, "*What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Obedience is far better than sacrifice. Listening to him is much better than offering the fat of rams. Rebellion is as bad as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you from being king.*" (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

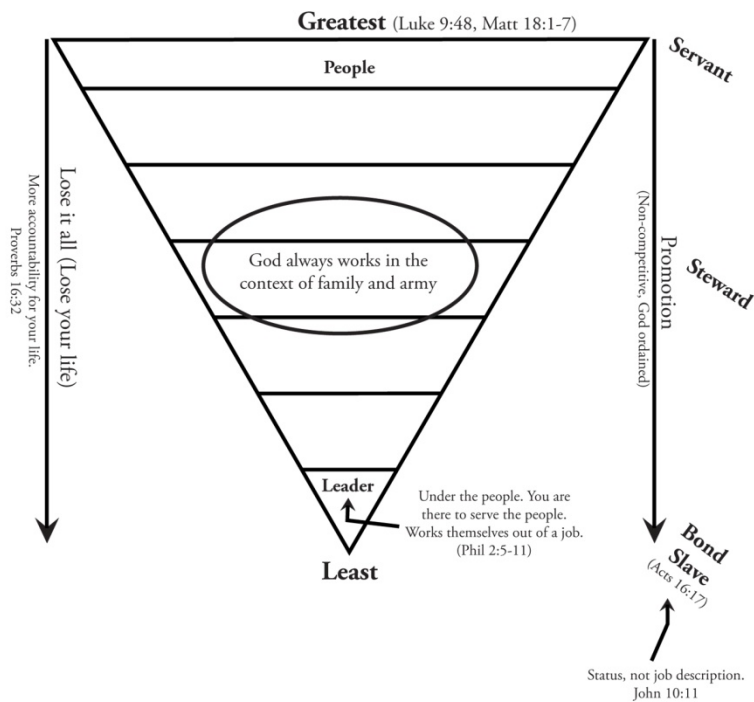
Rebellion lives in all of our hearts; it is part of the fall. But the degree to which rebellion finds an unchecked home in your life, you will experience it as a leader from your people. It is the spiritual law of sowing and reaping.

Enablement is applauded in our society. Enablement is when, experiencing a gap in leadership, people rise up and with illegal authority take control and do it themselves. When an enabler becomes a leader, they have trouble with boundaries and holding people accountable for their own actions in a healthy way. They experience rejection as a leader usually in the form of usurpation or abandonment.

Both fleshly responses to poor kingship breed feedback loops that perpetuate themselves. As a leader, it is important to know your fleshly defaults and to be intentional not to let them control you. It is also important to seek healing in your heart and personality so you can more closely resemble Christ as a leader. Recognize when you are motivated out of pride and counter that. Seek help and accountability from one another. Also, remember always to check **your** assumptions.



World's Leadership Model



Kingdom Leadership Model

Note: Every upgrade in the Kingdom will require death. Death to self. Less of you, more of Him.

The following table further illustrates the contrast between worldly bosses and biblical leaders:

Worldly Bosses	Biblical Leaders
A boss creates fear	A leader creates trust (1 Thessalonians 2:10-11)
A boss serves himself	A leader serves others (1 Corinthians 9:19)
A boss aims to make himself successful	A leader aims to make others successful (1 Timothy 4:6)
A boss says, "I"	A leader says, "we" (1 Corinthians 3:5-9)
A boss fixes blame	A leader fixes mistakes (Philemon 18-19)
A boss knows how	A leader shows how (Exodus 18:17)
A boss makes work a grind	A leader makes work worthwhile (Nehemiah)
A boss drives	A leader leads (John 10:11-15)
A boss wields authority	A leader empowers people (2 Timothy 2:2)
A boss relies on the power of authority	A leader relies on the power of servanthood (Matthew 20:25-28)

Taken from *Are You the Boss or the Leader?* by Steve Sileo. Ministry Tool Box 51 (May 15, 2002)