

THE CHRISTIAN LEADER - PART ONE

PREFACE:

The formal study of Christian leadership has been a neglected topic. Christian colleges, seminaries and universities have only recently offered courses in Christian leadership. My first exposure to anything like a formal study of the subject came when I was introduced to an extension study program on leadership development. It was presented from a Christian viewpoint, but the text books were mostly secular and I soon lost interest. I had been involved in grassroots leadership development on the mission field for over ten years and I was still looking for something that was practical for developing leadership on the grassroots level.

I was delighted a few year later when I came across the writings of Dr. John Maxwell. I found his books to be inspirational and encouraging. They were simple, practical and biblical. I began to offer leadership training seminars for church leaders on the grassroots level using idea and approaches to the subject from his books. The seminars were well received and they soon became an annual event. I picked up a few books on the topic from other Christian writers but I was always drawn back to the writings of Dr. John Maxwell.

I was delighted again when Equip, an organization established by Dr. John C Maxwell, began what they called the "Million Leaders Mandate." They sent well qualified men all over the world to train church leaders. They used six simple booklets each containing six easy lessons. The lessons covered both spiritual and practical aspects of Christian leadership. We immediately adopted these booklets for our annual leadership training seminars and expanded the seminars to all four countries where the Christian Leadership Training Institute is working.

Part of this material is taken from EQUIP's Million Leader Mandate Curriculum. EQUIP was founded by Dr. John C Maxwell to help the Christian community develop their leadership skills by teaching Biblical servant leadership. For more information on EQUIP, please go to www.iequip.org.

One other book caught my attention as I contemplated the need for giving the best guidelines in Christian leadership. That book is "They Smell Like Sheep" by Dr. Lynn Anderson. His wise explanation of shepherd-leadership and its importance to God is the perfect follow up to the writings of Dr. John Maxwell. He focuses on the heart of Christian leadership, being a spiritual servant to others.

This two-part course on Christian Leadership is based on three things, The writings of Dr. John Maxwell, the book by Dr. Lynn Anderson (*They Smell Like Sheep*) and 30 years of experience in western Africa developing church leaders on the grassroots level. Units one through eight are a combination of information and ideas gained from Dr. John Maxwell and my own personal experience. Unit nine is a combination of information gained from Dr. Lynn Anderson's book and my personal experience. Unit ten is totally from my heart as I strive to be sure the world view of the Christian leader is both biblical and in harmony with God's will.

I want to thank Dr. John C Maxwell and Dr. Lynn Anderson for their wisdom and creativity in preparing their writings. I hope they will forgive me for anything that seems like plagiarism. I also hope they will forgive me for taking some of their ideas and reorganizing them to meet the needs of this study.

I want to thank the staff of the Christian Leadership Training Institute who helped me evaluate the lessons, correct mistakes and make improvements by going through the rough draft as both students and as coworkers who are also concerned about developing good Christian leadership for the Lord's Kingdom.

Above all, I give thanks to God. I give Him all the glory, honor and praise for any and all good that may come from this extension course on Christian Leadership. May He be honored and glorified by this course.

For His glory,
Bob Sheffler

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INTRODUCTION:

Here are some profound statements about leadership that are worthy of meditation and prayer:

Leadership is necessary for progress. Christian Leadership is necessary for spiritual progress.

Leadership is the ability to take a complicated situation and organize it into a step by step procedure.

Leadership requires vision, integrity, patience and perseverance.

Real leadership is never appointed or awarded, leadership is earned.

Leadership is maintained through perseverance, continued vision and hard work.

A true leader develops more leaders.

A true leader develops a team, not an organization.

A successful leader respects and partners with those who can do what he cannot do.

Dr. John Maxwell says, "A leader who has no followers is only taking a walk." Leadership is influence.

Do people follow you because they want to or because they have to?

Leadership is not a matter of holding a position of authority. Leadership is the ability to bring development and progress. Leadership is the ability to bring blessings to all who are under our leadership. Good leadership involves both the right attitudes as well as the right skills. The right skills with the wrong attitudes brings destruction. The right attitudes with the wrong skills brings little or no success. The wrong attitudes with the wrong skills brings immediate failure.

No one is a perfect leader except for our Lord Jesus Christ. We all have weaknesses in the areas of skills and attitudes. However, with God's help, we can change our attitudes and we can improve on our skills. We can greatly increase our success rate by partnering with others who have skills that we do not have. We can greatly expand our vision, our patience and our perseverance by building a team instead of an organization.

Above all else, Christian leadership must build the Lord's Kingdom. It must be carried out in a way that pleases God and fulfills his will for mankind.

It is my prayer that this course on Christian Leadership will enable you to do that.

For His glory,
Bob Sheffler

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