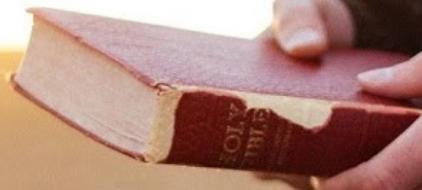




worldoutreach

SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP

MODULE TWO: CHARACTER OF A LEADER



Outline Session 1 - 3

1. Definitions of character. Primary biblical descriptions of character
2. How character is developed? (Part 1)
 - a. Interaction with people
 - b. Work of the Holy Spirit
3. How character is developed? (Part 2)
 - c. Dealings of God in a leader's life (tests and trials)

SESSION ONE: INTRODUCTION

(Howard Hendricks) 'The greatest crisis in the world today is a crisis of leadership, and the greatest crisis of leadership is a crisis of character.'

(R Ruth Barton) 'We set young leaders up for a fall if we encourage them to envision what they can *do* before they consider the kind of person they should *be*.'

Godly character is indispensable for effective, exemplary and enduring leadership.

DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING CHARACTER

Working definition of character in this module is from Aubrey Malphurs: 'Character is the sum total of a person's distinct qualities, both good and bad, that reflects who he or she is (being) and affect what he or she does (behaviour).'

Other elements of character:

- Character is the *inner life of a leader*
- Character is what we are *unobserved*
- Character is the *true evidence of our spirituality*
- Our true character is *revealed under pressure*
- Character is not *formed* so much by time or age, but by *experiences and choices*

A leader's character. Scripture speaks clearly of the necessity for Christian leaders to live '*above reproach*' (1 Tim. 3:2).

PRIMARY BIBLICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF GODLY CHARACTER

There are THREE key passages and themes in Scripture that describe godly character.

A. Likeness to Christ

The primary description of character is likeness to Christ. The Holy Spirit has been given to believers to transform their character into the likeness of Jesus (2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

B. Fruit of the Spirit

Christlike character is best described by the fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22-23 Paul articulates the ninefold 'fruit' of the Holy Spirit, which he is reproducing within us.

C. Practical holiness

A third key Scripture leading to an understanding of godly character is Peter's exhortation in his first epistle (1 Pet. 1:13-16) to '*...be holy*'. Holiness, importantly, has a practical expression ('*...be holy in all you do*'). Holiness must be outworked in the reality of our daily lives.



SESSION TWO: HOW IS CHARACTER DEVELOPED? (Part 1)

God uses many things to mould a leader's character. Three major categories will be outlined in this and the next session that God may use to transform a leader's character.

1. Through a leader's interaction with people

A first way God changes our character is through our engagement with people, which may include:

- A. Our Family
- B. Our marriage
- C. Church family (one another)
- D. People in general

2. Through the work of the Spirit in our lives

A biblical picture of this is the transfiguration (Matthew 17:2 & Mark 9:3) where all that Jesus was on the *inside* became visible on the *outside*.

The word 'transfigured' translates the Greek word *metamorphoo* from which the English word 'metamorphosis' derives. The word '*metamorphoo*' is translated in two other NT passages as 'transformed' (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Metamorphosis is a picture of the Spirit's work in our lives transforming us into the likeness of Christ from the inside out.



SESSION THREE: HOW IS CHARACTER DEVELOPED? (Part 2)

3. Through God's dealings in our life (tests and trials)

True character doesn't appear without pressure.

God intentionally tests the character of a leader for one of the following reasons:

- To expose areas of weakness in leader's lives that may be hidden to them.
- To refine and develop leaders with consistent character qualities.
- To teach leaders how to stand strong and firm in him through difficult circumstances.
- To develop a leader's personal maturity and conformity to Christ's image.
- To (ultimately) inwardly strengthen leaders to be more effective in Christian leadership

Examples from Scripture of leaders whose character was tested.

- A. Joseph avoiding the sexual advances of Mrs Potiphar (Genesis 39)
- B. Samuel uncontaminated by Eli's corrupt sons (1 Samuel 2)
- C. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's uncompromising attitude to idolatry (Daniel 3:16-18)
- D. Job's unshakable trust throughout his afflictions (Job 23:10; 13:15)
- E. Apostles' teaching and example of suffering (Romans 5:3-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7)

REFERENCES IN THIS MODULE:

Aubrey Malphurs, **BEING LEADERS**, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.
FF Bruce, **THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS**, NICNT (General Editor NT, Gordon Fee), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.
Bruce Hills, **INSIDE OUT**, Brisbane, QLD: CHI, 2017.
Andy Stanley, **THE NEXT GENERATION LEADER**, Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2003.
John Stott, 1996, **THE MESSAGE OF 1 TIMOTHY & TITUS**, BST (General Editor NT, John R.W. Stott), Leicester, UK: IVP, 1996.4:12).

