

# **Leadership Qualities: Leader Qualifications**

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Timothy stands out in Scripture as a stereotypical misfit for a leadership position. From what we know about him, he was timid, a bit sickly and perhaps reticent to do the work he'd been called to do. But when Paul wrote to this young man, his letters reflected the heart of a mentor who perceived his protégé's leadership potential despite the younger man's naturally timid disposition (2 Timothy 1:7).

Throughout his ministry with Paul, Timothy proved his mettle. Paul regarded him as "my true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2) and "my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 4:17). This young man overcame his natural limitations to become one of the early church's most significant leaders. His leadership character (Philippians 2:19-22) far outweighed the limitations of his physical presence.

Titus, like Timothy, was an associate of the apostle Paul's. Titus, like Timothy, was identified by Paul as "my true son" in the faith (Titus 1:4). Titus, unlike Timothy, was a go-getter, a passionate leader, one who was eager to take on a tough assignment.

What was true for Timothy and Titus is still true today. Character and hard work are essential for anyone who wants to lead. When God looks for leaders, he doesn't necessarily look for the tallest, best looking, most articulate or most charismatic among us. Paul told his two young associates to closely examine those who aspired to leadership. He required that such candidates pass the test of character.

Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own

family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

1 Timothy 3:2-12

Before stepping into a leadership role ourselves, or elevating others to leadership positions, we need to do some testing to see how well we or they measure up to the qualifications God has for leaders. While the traits identified by Paul refer specifically to leaders in the church, any leader who possesses them would have the kind of leadership character of which God approves.

The list of qualifications Paul sends to Titus is similar:

An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Titus 1:6-9

Notice that Paul is focused more on qualities of the heart than abilities. Skill-sets are important, but, ultimately, who you are is more fundamentally important than what you do. Of course, what we do is important, but our behavior ought to flow out of who we are. Rather than being a reservoir, we ought to be a river. We draw our life from Christ and allow his life to flow through us on an ongoing basis.

The summary statements for each of the lists above say, “the overseer must be above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:2) or the “elder must be blameless” (Titus 1:6). Leaders in the church are to have no moral or behavioral handles that others can grab onto and say, “This disqualifies this person from leadership.” A careful examination of the leader’s qualifications reveals someone who has his or her private (family) and public life in balance. This person exercises moderation and humility while maintaining a good reputation with those outside the church.

One more thing. Paul believed those who enter into the initial leadership role (deacon) should “first be tested.” (1 Timothy 3:10). The time to discover if someone can lead isn’t after they’ve assumed the role, but before. That’s still the best policy today. This level of character takes time to develop. It takes years to develop a good reputation. While nobody perfectly measures up to the leadership qualifications in these passages, we should all strive to achieve them.

### ***Take Me to Your Leader***

Who in Scripture best displays the qualities of true leadership? We might look to people such as Moses, David, Nehemiah or Paul and overlook the greatest Leader of all – God himself. From a biblical point of view, true leadership and authority are derived from the hand of God. Let’s turn to Isaiah 40 to look at God as the Sovereign Leader of all creation. As the unchanging absolute standard for truth, beauty and goodness, we understand that the immutability of God, that unchanging nature of God is such that there are no perfections that he lacks. “God is light; in him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). There is nothing that is ugly or impure or dishonorable in him.

So, when we look at Isaiah 40, we find a text that provides comfort for the people of God. After we read about the judgment and condemnation that will come as a result of Israel’s

sin, as a result of Judah's rebellion, we find a word of consolation, that God himself will provide a hope and a future for them.

See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Isaiah 40:10-11

The passage begins with a picture of one side of God's character, his authority and his sovereign power. But the next verse shifts to a different aspect, a view of his care and tenderness. God is both supremely powerful and supremely compassionate. He has tremendous authority and command on one hand, but he has incredible tenderness and affection on the other hand. These are marks of divine authority and leadership.

God is not a divine despot but a gracious and merciful Father who nurtures, guides and protects his people as a good shepherd cares for his flock. Because of his greatness and goodness, we do well to trust him and willingly surrender the control of our lives to him.

In comparing himself to a shepherd in John 10:11-18, Jesus evoked an image that was familiar to his audience and reminiscent of Isaiah's description of the Sovereign Lord. Jesus is the ultimate example of servant leadership. He led his followers by serving them.

Isaiah continues and asks a series of questions to illustrate God's tremendous power:

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heaven? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

Isaiah 40:12-15

Isaiah goes on to talk about how God orders the cosmos, the sun, the moon and the stars, the constellations. He calls all the stars by name, which is impressive, since there are approximately 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy alone. Yet God knows them all by name and holds them in their courses. He rules all things with authority.

The question we must ask ourselves is this: “If he can do that, can he also be trusted to take care of your life as well?” The answer is, “Of course!” God is incomparable; he has no needs. He is intimately acquainted with his created order and sustains it in ways we cannot imagine. God requires no counselor, and he is in complete control. “He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing” (v. 23).

As Daniel observed, “[W]isdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them” (Daniel 2:20-21). After a lengthy lesson, the Babylonian ruler, Nebuchadnezzar, discovered the same thing:

His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?”

Daniel 4:34-35

There is no authority to which God is accountable, nothing other than his own word to which he must be judged or held responsible. He himself is the unchanging authority for all things. He rules history. He rules nations. He does things for his own purposes and pleasure.

Frankly, we can't understand many of the things he does. How is it, for example, he allowed Hitler to continue as long as he did? We know of tyranny and horrors and brutality in the last century that seem to be unparalleled in terms of cruelty and the numbers of people who have been assassinated, murdered, persecuted. One wonders how God can allow this to happen. And yet the Scriptures assure us that when we see him we will know fully as we are fully known

(1 Corinthians 13:12). This is not to say that we will become omniscient like God is, but we will see that he has done all things well, and he has created and crafted a world where this amazing combination of human responsibility and freedom can somehow co-exist with his divine sovereignty.

God rules over all, and there is a deep and profound mystery that we have to hold in tension, because we simply cannot sort it all out. But, should I expect to understand the mind of God? Can I really plumb the mysteries of the trinity or of the dual nature of the God-man? Can I understand these mysteries? God transcends us all, but the startling thing is that he calls us all to become like him.

This is an intriguing issue of leadership. The qualifications of leaders, as they are laid out in the Bible, are nothing more than what God expects out of everyone who claims to be a follower of Christ. Biblical leadership is built on the foundation of being the person God expects every one of his children to be. Leaders are simply those men and women who are a little further along in the process of spiritual living than the rest of us. Their character, reputation and life skills are seen as exemplary. They live out what the rest of us are aiming for.

### ***That's the Next King?!***

Often this is evident to all. Sometimes, however, the leaders God raises up are not the same people that our world system would elevate to positions of leadership. A classic case in point is found in 1 Samuel 16. At this point in the Bible story, Israel has a king, but Saul has become a great disappointment. He started well enough but succumbed to folly and arrogance. He is no longer God's man because he chooses to walk in disobedience and rebellion. So Samuel is sent to anoint a new king:

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”

But Samuel said, “How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me.”

The Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.”

Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, “Do you come in peace?”

Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord.”

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

#### 1 Samuel 16:1-7

Even the prophet Samuel was fooled. When he looked at Jesse’s oldest son Eliab, he naturally assumed that God must have chosen this noble and sturdy young man to be the Lord’s anointed leader. But the Lord makes it clear in this passage that the people he chooses to do great things for him are called on the basis of inward character, not on the basis of outward impressiveness. In fact, the things that impress us aren’t impressive to God. The thing that God looks for is the quality of the heart.

We find later in the same story that Jesse, David’s father, didn’t even include David in the line-up of his sons (vv. 8-11). He was an afterthought to Jesse. But qualification for leadership is not measured by inches or pounds or degrees or background. What does God look for? Why is it that when Jesse and Samuel were looking at Eliab, God was looking at David? God’s qualifications for leadership are evident in verse 7: “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

Why is the condition of a person's heart such a big deal? Don't we often hear about the difference between a leader's private life and their ability to perform well on the job? All we have to do is look one generation removed from David to see the tragedy that awaits a leader whose heart is not right before God. In 1 Kings 3:6, Solomon is engaged in a conversation with the Lord. Solomon says, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day." Clearly Solomon began his reign well, but he was half-hearted. Just a few chapters later we read:

As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.... So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done.... So the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

1 Kings 11:4, 6

Whatever else qualifies people for leadership, no one is qualified for greatness – by God's standard – until his or her heart is ready. The leader's prayer and focus of effort must center here. Skills, intelligence and hard work are all a part of the package, but God reminds us that, in the final analysis, one thing makes the difference. God looks at the leader's heart.

David had a whole heart for God. In spite of the fact that he often succumbed to infidelity and foolishness, he always returned to God. He continually pursued God. Being described as a man after God's own heart does not have to mean that David pursued God's heart (though, in fact, he did). Perhaps it means that David's heart was like God's. That was the best part of David's heart, its unwillingness to give up on God. Lynn Anderson, in his book *The Shepherd's Song*, writes:

Because he was a man after God's own heart, David never gave up on his relationship with God. This is precisely what is godlike about David's heart. God did not give up on His relationship with David, either. Nor does He give up on us. No matter where we are, or what we have done, or where things appear to be headed at this point in life, He is calling us on. All we have to do is follow.<sup>1</sup>

We have said before that in the end, you become what your desires make you. This is why Jesus stresses the importance of the pure heart and the clear eye (Matthew 5:8; 7:5). Kierkegaard saw double-mindedness as the essential disease of the human heart. His book *Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing* is a meditation on the statement from James: "Purify your hearts, you double-minded" (James 4:8). The disease diagnosed by Kierkegaard is the failure to have a life that is focused on one thing. It is the failure to make an ultimate commitment to what Kierkegaard calls "the Good" – what Jesus spoke of as "seeking first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33).

When you have a divided heart, you have divided loyalties. You become like the man James describes: "like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind" (James 1:6). Jesus tells a story about a man who went out to sow seeds. Some of the seeds, you'll remember, fell among the thorns and were choked out by "the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things" (Mark 4:19).

A life characterized by ambivalence is painful. We are pushed and pulled in many directions, longing for intimacy with God and running from it at the same time. We want to be generous but find ourselves hoarding and covetous. We try to be servants, but our service is often driven by arrogance and a desire to be recognized. It is a life expressed in Augustine's famous request, when he both longed for purity and innocence and yet was unready to change his lifestyle and feared losing pleasure: "Lord, give me chastity, but not yet." Even the apostle Paul

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<sup>1</sup> Lynn Anderson, *The Shepherd's Song*. West Monroe, LA: Howard, 1996, 191.

faced this dilemma: “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do” (Romans 7:15). The capacity of the human heart for duplicity is staggering.

And yet it is possible, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to achieve a heart united in its passion for God. Clifford Williams writes:

We possess singleness when we are not pulled in opposite directions and when we act without wanting something further for ourselves. Our inner drives do not conflict; they are aimed in one direction. The motives we appear to have are the ones we really have. Our inner focus is unified and our public posture corresponds with it. We are not, in short, divided.<sup>2</sup>

We can hear the echo of this sentiment in a piece of advice Jesus gave to a friend named Martha. She was “distracted by all the preparations that had to be made” and resented her sister, Mary, who had chosen to just sit in the presence of Jesus. “Martha, Martha...you are worried about many things, but only one thing is needed” (cf. Luke 10:38-42). If we get caught up in seeking the finite rather than seeking the one for whom we were made and meant to pursue, the result will always be misery. “You have made us for yourself,” Augustine said, “and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.”

### ***The Positive and Negative Aspects of Leadership***

In a utilitarian society such as ours, people frequently want to quantify things. How many good deeds does it take to convince us that we (or others) are qualified for leadership? The apostle Peter would say, “That’s the wrong question to ask.” So what’s the right question? Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2:1-3, “Rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.”

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<sup>2</sup> Clifford Williams, *Singleness of Heart*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994, 10.

Here Peter provides a standard for leadership qualifications. In verse 1, he lists things to weed out of our lives. That's an essential list. When evaluating a leader, we need to be aware of what things should scare us – what we don't want. But we also need to identify what we *do* want. What are the qualifications we examine when we hire or educate or evaluate leaders?

Peter didn't give us that list. Instead, he provided a standard and a process. Peter said, "get rid of the negative" (v. 1). Stop practicing malice, deceit and the like. Your heart must be emptied of these things so it can, in turn, be filled with the things of God. In other words, if the vessel is full, God cannot fill it with himself. He must determine the content of my life, which is a dangerous and frightening concept. It requires true repentance, not just a turning away from my own direction but also a release of that to which I cling so tightly. I must let go of my own agenda in order for God to fill me with what he desires for me. Inviting him to do this is a wrenching process, and it's not a one-time event. It has to happen regularly, because the truth is, I let go of things only to pick them back up again. There is a consistent pattern called the law of undulation. We go through peaks and valleys; we take two steps forward and one step back.

So, there is a negative aspect to this: I must rid myself of certain things. On the other hand, there is a positive aspect. Like a baby craves his or her mother's milk, so I must crave pure spiritual milk. More than following a laundry list of good deeds or qualities, the leader must be passionate about his or her spiritual health.

The leader qualifies on the positive side of the equation by showing a passion for spiritual goodness. He or she isn't identified so much by a checklist of good deeds as by a quality of goodness. Peter also emphasizes the need for growth (v. 2).

Leaders aren't qualified merely because they practice good deeds (although they must do that). They're qualified by possessing a passion and a craving for high spiritual qualities and

exhibiting a consistent pattern of growth in those qualities. Often, this growth will occur in spurts followed by long plateaus. Frequently, we will find ourselves struggling with weights we thought we had laid aside long ago. But if the focus of our hearts is to return to God, we can say honestly that we are growing in the things of God.

### ***To Do or To Be? That is the Real Question***

Leaders do need to cultivate both skills and qualities. Sid Buzzell helps us understand the difference between the two and why we should never neglect the development of personal character. He suggests that as we read the list of nine “fruits” God’s Spirit produces in a life (Galatians 5:22-23), we can draw a line down the center of a page and list skills on one side and qualities on the other: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such there is no law.” If we were to do the same experiment with 1 Timothy 3:1-12 or Titus 1:6-9, we would find similar results. The “do” list is very short and the “be” list is very long in comparison.

Leaders, under God’s good hand, must never stop cultivating leadership qualities. In fact, regardless of how well a person masters any skill, the choice of whether to use that skill appropriately is a character issue more than a skill issue. I may, for instance, develop great listening skills because I know listening is important to effective leadership. But unless I address my impatience and arrogance, I won’t listen. In this case I have the qualifying skill, but I don’t use it because I don’t have the more important character qualification. I haven’t become others-centered.

Paul, when listing what Timothy and Titus should look for in leaders, said a leader is qualified by character more than by skill. Leaders, in their personal development and in leadership education, need to develop skills. But they cannot, under any circumstances, neglect

the more important focus on life qualities (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1) or the essential relationship with God's Spirit that is the wellspring of those qualities (Galatians 5).<sup>3</sup>

All leadership relates to ministry. There is a false dichotomy that causes people to believe that business leaders should be different from ministry leaders. But from a biblical perspective, there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular. Rather, we are to view life holistically. This is the only way we can live an integrated life, where our beliefs and our behaviors align and every area of life is brought under the lordship of Christ.

So, the mindset that says, "I'm not a minister; I'm a business leader" is opposed to Scripture. Ministry is not something that is reserved for professional clergy, nor is it something that only happens on certain days of the week. All those who are called to follow Jesus Christ are called to minister to others. These ministry opportunities usually come in unexpected ways at unexpected times, but they are always around us – even in the business arena. If the Spirit of God is living in you, then you are enough to minister to others. If your heart is open and receptive to the Spirit's leading, then you will find yourself being used to further God's kingdom purposes.

Your ministry may seem small and insignificant at first, but this is often how God begins. Through the prophet Zechariah, he tells us not to "despise the day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10). He tells us in the same chapter that things that really matter get accomplished "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit" (v. 6). Bethlehem was a small little backwater town, and yet it became the birthplace of the Savior. David was the youngest son of a poor family, yet he became the greatest king in the history of Israel. Moses had a speech impediment. Paul wasn't very impressive as a public speaker. But God has a way of taking small things, seemingly insignificant people and turning them into leaders who forcefully advance his kingdom.

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Sid Buzzell, *Leadership and Management Course Syllabus*, Denver Seminary, 1996.

It's not a question of size or skills; it's a question of fidelity. And the level of our fidelity is largely determined by the degree of our trust. Do we really believe that God can take something small and insignificant and turn it into something of great value and beauty? If we believe that little is much when it's placed in the hands of Jesus, then we will freely offer him our meager gifts, expecting him to expand them and empower them. We will no longer be satisfied to be spectators; we will become participants in this grand adventure that is life between the advents. We will look for ministry opportunities on this day and each day and welcome our God-given significance. We will seek ways to sharpen and hone our God-given gifts.

God's work will be done regardless, but if we don't get involved, we will miss out. God's work will be done without us. He has invited us to participate with him in his work; that is completely amazing. Mother Teresa was frequently asked, "How can you possibly feel that you are successful? Look at the number of people that you cannot minister to in the streets of Calcutta." She would reply, "God doesn't require us to succeed; he only requires that you try." Other times she would say, "I do not pray for success; I ask for faithfulness."

Mother Teresa knew that to measure her success in numbers was folly. Success has more to do with being faithful with the things God has placed before you than it has to do with converting the great masses. Most effective ministry is done one person at a time. There's nothing wrong with being a little idealistic and wanting to change the world, but the world is changed slowly, gradually, one person at a time.

### ***The Messiness of Ministry***

Ministry is messy. Mess is an integral part of ministry, because ministry has to do with people and people are messed up. Our perfect model of ministry is none other than Jesus himself, and his ministry was messy. He touched lepers. He wept with grieving families. He hung out with

the lowly: children, gentiles, tax collectors, hookers, even gentiles. Ministry is, ultimately, about Jesus living in you and through you. Ministry is being his hands and feet, sacrificially serving others today as he did 2,000 years ago.

Nothing we will be called to do in service to others will be as messy as what Christ did on our behalf. He will never call us do to something for others that he hasn't done, to a far greater extent, for us. Recognizing this changes our perspective.

When a person decides to take seriously the challenge to be an ambassador for Christ, to develop a mindset of ministry, he takes one of two approaches. Either he tries to learn and impart skills, or he focuses on allowing the Spirit of Christ to change his thinking and character. Only the latter approach will allow him to serve from a Christlike spirit of humility and selflessness. Yet how few seminaries concentrate on development of character even half as much as they concentrate on development of skills or knowledge? Ministry should flow out of who we are. Ministry must come out of our relationship with Christ as we respond to God's invitation to join him in what he is doing.

A true ministry mindset understands how dispensable we are, and that it's only because of God's grace that we are invited to join him in his work. Realizing that the work is his allows us to take great risks. As he calls us to step out in faith, esteeming his agenda above our own, we can respond like children jumping into the arms of a Father who has promised not to drop us, will not drop us, cannot, in fact, drop us.

This kind of adventure is truly rewarding. It's not always fun. It's certainly not convenient. But it is the only sure path to contentment and joy. To play a part in altering another person's eternal destiny...can anything compare to that kind of fulfillment? It causes a sense of enormous gratitude to well up inside our otherwise miserly hearts.

I often ask myself the question, “What would I like to say to God the night before I die?” Think about that for a moment. If you knew you were going to die tomorrow morning, what would you like to say to God tonight? We have a record of such an event in the Gospel of John. The night before he would hang on a cross to pay for the sins of the world, Jesus says to his Father, “I have finished the work that you gave me to do” (John 17:4). I pray that I have the fidelity to finish the work God has given me to do, that my investments don’t die with me, that the things I devoted myself to live on after I’m gone.

Ministry requires discipline. But we must be careful about the motivation behind practicing the disciplines. Doing the disciplines as ends in themselves results in death in the long-run. Dallas Willard wrote, “Spirituality wrongly understood or pursued is a major source of human misery and rebellion against God.”<sup>4</sup> Reading the Bible and praying and going to church won’t help you much if you’re just doing them to do them. But if you’re showing up to meet with God, that’s another matter. Disciplines may be more a matter of choice than feeling. So part of discipline is to show up when you don’t feel like it. However, spiritual disciplines are not necessarily unpleasant. After all, if a disciplined life is a life characterized by love, joy and peace, we may assume that some of the disciplines might actually be pleasant.

What we do today has eternal consequences. Our actions ripple forever. Because our value system is so vastly different from heaven’s value system, it could be that what turns out to be our most significant day of ministry will seem to us to have been a day wasted. Odds are, your most effective time of ministry will not appear on your daily calendar. It won’t be in your appointment book. You might think that it was an inconvenience. But from God’s perspective, that’s the moment you’ll be remembered for. Unless you live with margin, being attentive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, you might just miss your moment of greatest impact.

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<sup>4</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988, 91.

Let's close these reflections on leader qualifications with a prayer by Mother Theresa.

Dear Jesus, help us to spread your fragrance everywhere we go. Flood our souls with your Spirit and life. Penetrate and possess our whole being so utterly that our lives may only be a radiance of yours. Shine through us and be so in us that every soul we come in contact with may feel your presence in our soul. Let them look up and see no longer us but only Jesus. Stay with us, and then we will begin to shine as you shine, to so shine as to be light to others. The light will be all from you. It will be you shining on others through us. Let us, thus, praise you in the way you love best, by shining around us. Let us preach you without preaching, not by words but by our example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what we do, the evident fullness of the love of our hearts bare to you. Amen.