

The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development

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Preface

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What does it mean to be a leader? What does it take to become the leader God wants you to be? What are the processes, the cost, and the result?

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Leadership is a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group.[

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This is contrary to the popular notion that a leader must have a formal position,

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a formal title, or formal training. Many who are called to lead in church or parachurch organizations may not have formal titles such as pastor or director. They may be Sunday school teachers, small group leaders, or lay people functioning in any number of other leadership capacities. To be considered a leader, one does not require a professional position nor need to be a "full-time Christian worker." This book is written for all who influence a specific group of people for God's purposes, whether or not they are professional, paid leaders.

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Four things will happen as you read this book: You will learn about the providence of God. You will begin to sense a continuity of God's working in your past to develop you as a leader. You will have a high degree of anticipation because God is going to use you in the future. Finally, you will perceive yourself and others in terms of insights gained from this book. You will become more deliberate in using these insights for the development and training of others.

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When you look on leadership emergence in terms of life's processes, you quickly realize who the academic dean really is. It is God.

Introduction: Who Needs These Lessons Anyway?

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Leaders influence followers in different ways. Direct, indirect, and organizational influence are three main ways a leader influences.

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If you know that God will be developing you over a lifetime, you'll most likely stay for the whole ride.

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My leadership emergence theory can be stated in relatively simple terms: God develops a leader over a lifetime. That development is a function of the use of events and people to impress leadership lessons upon a leader (processing), time, and leader response. Processing is central to the theory. All leaders can point to critical incidents in their lives where God taught them something very important.

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Most leaders who drop out of ministry do so in the middle-game; they do not continue well.

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Leadership is a lifetime of God's lessons. Yours will be unique. God will take you through several "leadership stages" on your way to a lifetime of service. I anticipate that this book will give you insights for your journey.

Chapter 1: A Letter to Dan, the Intern

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few leaders minister out of what they are. Their authority usually springs from a role.

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During all the development phases, God processes a person by bringing activities, people, problems—you name it—into his life. We call these process items.

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An integrity check tests inner character for consistency. Will you follow through on a commitment?

Chapter 2: The Basis for Lessons: The Big Picture

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Methods are many, Principles are few. Methods always change, Principles never do.

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A timeline is a linear display along a horizontal axis that is broken up into development phases.[10] Phase I. Sovereign Foundations Phase II. Inner-Life Growth Phase III. Ministry Maturing Phase IV. Life Maturing Phase V. Convergence Phase VI. Afterglow Figure 2-4 The Generalized Timeline

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In Phase I, Sovereign Foundations, God providentially works through family, environment, and historical events. This begins at birth. You might find it hard to believe that God was working through your family or your environment, especially if these were not godly influences, but He was.

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In Phase I, God is developing the leader by laying foundations in his life. This operation is sovereign. The potential leader has little control over what happens in this phase. His primary lesson is to learn to respond positively and take advantage of what God has laid in these foundations.

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Phase II, the Inner-Life Growth phase. The leader learns the importance of praying and hearing God.

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he is put to the test.

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These early tests are crucial experiences that God uses to prepare the leader for the next steps in leadership.

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In this phase, leadership potential is identified and God uses testing experiences to develop character. A proper, godly response allows a leader to learn the fundamental lessons God wants to teach. If the person doesn't learn, he will usually be tested again in the same areas. A proper response will result in an expanding ministry and greater responsibility.

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In Phase III, Ministry Maturing, the emerging leader reaches out to others. He is beginning to experiment with spiritual gifts even though he may not know what this doctrine is. He may get training in order to be more effective. Ministry is the focus of the rising leader at this stage. Many of his lessons will zero in on relationships with other people or on the inadequacies in his personal life.

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Ministry activity or fruitfulness is not the focus of Phases I, II, and III. God is working primarily in the leader, not through him.[

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By Phase IV, Life Maturing, the leader has identified and is using his spiritual gifts in a ministry that is satisfying. He gains a sense of priorities concerning the best use of his gifts and understands that learning what not to do is as important as learning what to do.

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Communion with God becomes foundational; it is more important than success in ministry.

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In Convergence, Phase V, God moves the leader into a role that matches his gift-mix and experience so that ministry is maximized.[14] The leader uses the best he has to offer and is freed from ministry for which he is not gifted or suited. Life Maturing and Ministry Maturing peak together during this period.

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Many leaders do not experience convergence,

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they are hindered by their own lack of personal

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development. At other times, an organization may hinder a leader by keeping him in a limiting position.[

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The major developmental task for Phase V is the guidance of the leader into a role and place where he can have maximum effectiveness.

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For a very few, there is Phase VI, Afterglow (or Celebration).[17] The fruit of a lifetime of ministry and growth culminates in an era of recognition and indirect influence at broad levels. Leaders in Afterglow have built up a lifetime of contacts and continue to exert influence in these relationships.

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the very nature of leadership is influence,

Chapter 3: Foundational Lessons: Inner-Life Growth Processes

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Our greatest challenge as leaders is to develop a godly character. Warren Wiersbe addresses this issue: Apart from character, ministry is only religious activity or even worse, religious business.

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G. Campbell Morgan was riding with D. L. Moody . . . when suddenly Moody asked, "What is character anyway?" Morgan knew that the evangelist wanted to answer his own question, so he waited. "Character," said Moody, "is what a man is in the dark. . . ." Perhaps the key word is integrity. . . . No amount of reputation can substitute for character.[1]

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Wiersbe has captured the essence of a godly character in one word: integrity. There are many lessons in the development of a leader. None are more crucial in timing or in impact than the early ones, which focus on character building.

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In this phase, God uses four important process items to test an emerging leader's character. Three of the items are called checks because of the testing nature of this phase.[2] These are integrity checks, obedience checks, and word checks.

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uncompromising adherence to a code of moral, artistic, or other values that reveals itself in sincerity, honesty, and candor and avoids deception or artificiality.[

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Integrity is the heart of character.[

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An integrity check is a test that God uses to evaluate intentions in order to shape character.

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Because character development has many facets, there are a variety of integrity checks. This is a sampling of the many that I have identified: values (which determine convictions), temptation (which tests conviction), conflict against ministry vision (which tests faith), an alternative in guidance situations (which tests calling), persecution (which tests steadfastness), loyalty (which tests allegiance), and restitution (which tests honesty).[6]

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A leader must learn obedience in order to influence others toward obedience. An obedience check is a process item through which a leader learns to recognize, understand, and obey God's voice.

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Leadership is important for influencing specific groups of people to obey God. They will not achieve this unless they themselves know how to obey. This brings me to my second major principle in the testing pattern of the inner-life phase: Obedience is first learned, then taught.

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A leader must have the ability to receive truth from God. This gift, receiving truth from God, is essential because it builds spiritual authority, which is the basis for a spiritual leader's influence.[

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A word check is the process item that tests a leader's ability to understand or receive a word from God personally and then allow God to work it out in his life. When successfully passed, a word check will lead to more truth.

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Trotman kept walking down the street, but now he was a different man. This experience with the memorized Word became the cornerstone for the discipling model he eventually developed.

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Failure to pass a word check often results in repeated lessons and lengthened development time. It can result, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, in discipline and removal from ministry.

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a godly leader is a person with God-given capacity and God-given responsibility to influence specific groups of God's people toward His purposes for the group. Inner-life growth testing focuses on developing capacity and responsibility in a leader. Character is foundational if a leader is to influence people for God's purposes.