

# How to Lead Yourself *Before* You Lead Others!

## Spiritual Leadership Training

The toughest person to lead is often yourself! Before you can effectively lead others, you must first learn to effectively lead yourself. Self-Leadership includes the disciplines of Solitude and Journaling. The big idea here is: You can't lead others where you are not!

*What is Leadership?*

*What is Spiritual Leadership?*

***Self-Leadership is the First Requirement for Effective Spiritual Leadership!  
You cannot lead others effectively until you have first led yourself!***

### What is Self-Leadership?

Self-Leadership is putting your own ducks in a row *before* you straighten someone else's ducks! It's attending to your own connection with the Master before you attempt to help others spiritually! This is the work that no one can do for you! This is the work that we would rather do anything else but this one thing! And yet, the best gift you can give to this church is a "healthy, energized, fully surrendered, focused self."

Leadership author Dee Hock recommends: "We should invest 50 percent of our leadership amperage into the task of leading ourselves; and the remaining 50 percent should be divided into leading down, leading up, and leading laterally."

- How can I possibly help others become passionate about serving God when I am not?
- How can I possibly hear the quiet whisper of the Holy Spirit when I surround myself with noise?
- How can I encourage others to commit themselves to Christ while I remain uncommitted?
- How can I serve the church with vision and clarity when my own life is unfocused?
- How can I possibly love others appropriately if I do not love Christ preeminently?

*Why is it that the toughest person to lead is often yourself?*

## **Self Diagnostic:**

- Do I have passion for the things of God and for my ministry involvement? If not, what happened to it? Whose job is it to maintain my passion?
- Are my ears wide open to the Spirit's whisper?
- Do I have the guts to obey Him no matter what he might ask of me?
- Do I know what I am trying to accomplish in my ministry? If you don't, who does? Do I pray for that specifically?

“I estimate that 75 to 80 percent of the breakthrough ideas in my leadership over the years have come from promptings of the Holy Spirit, not through hard machinations of my mind. Some of the great sermon series or vision adjustments, value clarifications or strategy changes, some of the greatest people selections have not been due to my cleverness. It has been the Holy Spirit whispering to my spirit.” Bill Hybles, Willow Creek Community Church

## **Jesus practiced Self-Leadership.**

Bill Hybels notes: “Even Jesus needed to invest regularly in keeping his calling clear, avoiding mission drift, and keeping distraction and temptation at bay.” (Bill Hybels, *The Art of Self-Leadership*, Leadership Journal, Summer 2001) Jesus would often go to a quiet place and recalibrate. For us, Self-Leadership includes the disciplines of Solitude and Journaling.

**Solitude Defined:** “The practice of seeking aloneness, in a place free of noise and distractions, for the sake of spiritual reflection and communion with God.”

### **A Biblical Basis**

- ❖ Matthew 14:22-23
- ❖ Mark 1:35-38
- ❖ Luke 4:42, 6:11-13

### **What others have said about Solitude...**

- ❖ “Solitude frees us, actually. This above all explains its primacy and priority among the disciplines. The normal course of day-to-day human interactions locks us into patterns of feeling, thought and action that are geared to a world set against God. Nothing but solitude

can allow the development of a freedom from the ingrained behaviors that hinder our integration into God's order." (Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, p. 160)

- ❖ "The wisdom of our language has grasped these two sides of man's being alone. It has created the word loneliness in order to emphasize the pain of being alone, and it has created the word solitude in order to emphasize the glory of being alone." (Paul Tillich, "Let Us Dare to Have Solitude," in Quarterly Review, pp. 10-11).

### **Getting Practical**

- Plan a regular time and place to meet with the Lord.
- Plan *how* you will utilize your time alone with the Lord.
- Equip your space with a Bible, hymn book, journal, and a pen.
- Deal with distractions.
  - Turn off the phone
  - Have a to-do pad next to you so that you can write things down for later.

***Application: What will you do? When will you do it? Where will you do it?***

- ❖ **Journaling Defined:** "The practice of keeping a written record of one's spiritual journey, including personal interaction and encounter, with God and people."

### **Biblical Basis**

- ❖ Psalm 77:11-12
- ❖ Psalm 103:1-2
- ❖ Joshua 4:1-7

### **What others have said about Journaling...**

- ❖ "Most of us...live unexamined lives. We repeat the same errors day after day. We don't learn much from the decisions we make, whether they are good or bad. We don't know why we're here or where we are going. One benefit of journaling is to force us to examine our lives." (Bill Hybels, *Too Busy Not to Pray*, p. 103).

- ❖ “Journaling can be more than simply a means to ‘think things through’; it can be a spiritual discipline. One person may journal in response to a Bible study. Another may take a meditational walk or have a time of silence and then record the thoughts and prayer that occurred during that time. Someone else may record daily events and then see the hand of God in that dailiness.” (Ann Broyles, *Journaling: A Spirit Journey*, p. 13).

### **Getting Practical**

- Choose a journaling method that works for you.
- Interact, with full honesty with God. Write about aspirations, fears, sins, struggles, and relationships with people.
- Use the journal as a record book of what God reveals to you through other spiritual disciplines and through daily living.
- When God grants insight or encouragement, write it down. Don’t let it slip away.
- Keep it secure.
- Keep track of the date, time, and day of the week.
- Refer back to it over time as a means of encouragement, accountability, and perspective. You may even want to highlight entries for later reference (P=answered prayer, V=a item of spiritual victory, B=biblical insight, etc...)
- Give it a try! Make at least two journal entries per week for the next 8 weeks.

### **Self-Leadership is where Spiritual Leadership Begins!**

**Homework Assignment:** Get alone! Read carefully through Psalm 84. Pay close attention to the yearning of the psalmist. Write out your own summary of the psalm. Write/journal reflectively on what comes to your mind as you read/study this passage.

#### **Sources:**

“The Art of Self Leadership: Your toughest management challenge is always yourself.” Bill Hybels, *Leadership Journal*, Summer 2001, pp. 86-91

Humble Strength Leadership: Empowering Effective Leadership and a Balanced Life Leadership Seminar by Dale Burke.

How to Stay Spiritually Fresh in the Pastorate Workshop, Dr. Dan Green, Moody Pastor’s Conference.