

# **GOD ORIENTED CHARACTERISTICS**

...self-discipline, loyalty, readiness to accept responsibility, willingness to admit mistakes...  
selflessness, modesty, humility, willingness to sacrifice when necessary...  
Faith in God. [General Matthew B. Tidgway]

**When God wants to drill a man  
And Thrill a man  
And skill a man,  
When God wants to mould a man  
To play the noble's part;  
When He yearns with all His heart  
To create so great and bold a man  
That all the world shall be amazed,  
Watch His methods, watch His ways!  
How He ruthlessly perfects  
Whom He royally elects!  
How He hammers him and hurts him,  
And with mighty blows converts him  
Into trial shapes of clay which  
Only God understands  
While his tortured heart is crying  
And he lifts beseeching hands!  
How He bends but never breaks  
When his good He undertakes;  
How He uses whom He chooses  
And with every purpose fuses him;  
By every act induces him;  
To try His splendour out--  
God Knows what He is about!**

(J. Oswald Sanders)

In dealing with the subject of the character of a leader, we must not forget that a good, personal relationship with god is essential to effective Christian Leadership. I would like to emphasize some particular aspects of character which are key to the success of a Christian leader. Success in life is not determined by position - It is determined by person. Whether a president or a cab driver, what is God accomplishing in your life?

## **God-awareness**

We need to be continually "in touch" and "in tune" with the Lord's leading. This process should be as natural as our breathing. We do not consciously tell ourselves to take the next breath; instead we breathe without thinking or being aware of it.

Likewise, we need to have a close relationship with God so that the still, small voice deep within our being will be able to speak and we will listen and obey.

A leader cannot be effective if he has not learned to follow the leading of God in his daily living. This involves a faith that overcomes the emotional ups-and-downs, doubts, and discouragements. For what are you trusting God that **only** He can do?

What is there in your life that can only be explained on the basis of the supernatural? Are you a product of God at work in your life?

Consider the life of Joseph (Gen. 39-50). He was blessed by God; he was a clean man in a corrupt society. He was distinctively different and ambitious; God was with him.

## Self-awareness & Self-esteem

We must be aware of who God is, and how He views us. How we view ourselves (a healthy self-esteem) is also important. Leaders know themselves; they don't ignore their weaknesses or underestimate their strengths.

He who knows others is clever; he who knows himself is enlightened. **[Lao Tzu]**

We must have a proper perspective of ourselves from God's view point. There was a trend in the 1960s in some traditional Christian groups which constantly pounded away that we are all as filthy rags, worms, nothing, scum, etc. When there is an imbalance in this concept, an individual can acquire such a low self-esteem which is very anti-Scriptural.

Yes, it is true that man has sinned and therefore cannot stand before the Almighty God without the atonement of Christ. Yes, there is Scripture which indicates that we, in ourselves, are nothing - But, **we must not forget the grace of God**. We are created in His image for a particular purpose; we are redeemed by the shed blood of Christ; accept this! We are joint-heirs with Christ and children of God by accepting Christ! Does God think of each one of us as filth? NO! You are cleansed by receiving Him! God created each one of us with a unique blend of strengths, abilities, gifts and weaknesses. We need to develop and use those strengths, abilities and gifts to do what God wants.

Calvin Miller puts it bluntly!

Perhaps you were taught as a Child to see yourself as loathsome to God, you can then become loathsome to yourself. Jean-Paul Sartre in "The Flies" has a man crying out, " I Stink! Oh, how I Stink! I am a mass of rotteness...I have sinned a thousand times...and I reek to heaven!"...

For 400 years we evangelicals have been telling ourselves that we are totally depraved. For forty decades we have put ourselves so far down that we find it hard to really see the

God-given good in our lives. We must never excuse man's fallen condition. Human wilfulness is the reason for the cross of Christ. Even though we are fallen, however, we are also stamped with the "imago dei" (the image of God) and can legitimately celebrate the good things that are part of us. This is especially true of those who have made Christ Lord of their lives.

We often speak of the imperative self-esteem. Certainly self-esteem is imperative in the life of every really secure leader. But what is self-esteem? Stanley Coopersmith defines self-esteem as "the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy." For the real leader, this evaluation is not only important, it is essential.

### **Self-confidence is God-confidence - Confidence in what God created and is developing.**

In a "Wall Street Journal" article, the inference was made **that people of low self-esteem can manage but can never lead.** One thing is sure: Leadership and management often fall into widely separate categories. The article goes on to say that no one is really eager to be managed, while the entire world is hungry to be led-

***If you want to manage  
somebody, Manage yourself.  
Do that well and you will be  
ready  
To Stop managing and start  
leading.***

Leaders consider themselves rich for they see wealth not in dollars and cents, but the wealth of knowing different personalities and qualities in people they work with, the friends they have, the places they see, the opportunities they have had, and many other things they come in contact with.

*There are two ways of being rich. One is to have all you want, tho other is to be satisfied with all that you have. [Robert Fritz]*

**Often people will try to remain in their cocoons instead of breaking out of the cocoon and becoming the beautiful butterfly God intended the "Caterpillar" to become!**

Leaders are people who cultivate a positive expression even when the going gets tough, for that is when the tough get going and demonstrate a positive expression.

*Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important.* [Roger Fritz]

Leaders are men and women who have often altered their mediocre lives to productive living.

*People can alter their lives  
by altering their attitudes.*  
**[William James]**

God does not want us to look like we have a sour lemon in our mouths all the time! Our countenance should radiate the glory of God, because God's Holy Spirit indwells us. A good leader has mood and emotional control with optimism.

I have often thought that the best way to define a man's character would be to see out the particular mental and moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensively active and alive. At such moments, there is a voice inside which speaks and says, "This is the real me." [William James in "Letters of William James"]

Do you know yourself - the flaws, the weaknesses, the strengths, the gifts and the talents that are there?

The Apostle Paul seems to have had a measure of knowledge about himself and often what he saw he didn't like... that's being honest with yourself! Knowing yourself is part of character, for then you can do something further with the good part and deal with the bad.

No one can teach you how to become yourself, to take charge, to express yourself, except you. But there are some things that you can learn from others in the process. Four aspects of self-knowledge

- You are your own best teacher
- Accept responsibility. Blame no one.
- You can learn anything you want to learn.
- True understanding comes from reflecting on your experience.

**In the context of our study** on self-awareness and self-esteem, we could say

**Leaders learn from others,  
but they are not made by others.**

This is the distinguishing mark of leaders. the paradox becomes a dialectic [logical argumentation]. The self and the other synthesize through self-invention.

What that means is that here and now, **true learning must often be preceded by unlearning.** Often we taught by our parents and teachers and friends how to go along, to measure up to their standards, rather than allowed to be ourselves and adapt to the present day reality!

**Their teaching and their standards were not necessarily bad in their particular situation or time in history. The danger is to be forced into moulds that God never intended for you or me to fill.**

Every great inventor or scientist has had to **unlearn** conventional wisdom in order to proceed with his work. For example, conventional wisdom said, "If God had meant man to fly; He would have given him wings." But the Wright brothers disagreed and built an airplane.

Positive self-esteem empowers, energizes, and motivates. It inspires us to achieve and allows us to take pleasure and pride in our achievements. It also helps us pick ourselves up more quickly after a fall, leaving us with more energy to begin anew.

People with high self-esteem reveal certain characteristics, such as:

1. **They are ambitious.** They have a strong drive.
2. **They are goal-oriented.** They seek the challenge and stimulation of worthwhile and demanding goals.
3. **They are communicative.** They are to be understood and welcome clarity.
4. **They are loving.** They want nourishing and quality relationships instead of toxic ones.
5. **They are attractive.** This is revealed in their personality and appearance.

People with low self-esteem reveal certain characteristics, for example:

1. **They fear change.** They aspire to less, and achieve less. they remain in the **safety of the familiar and undemanding.**
2. They are non-communicative. They are evasive **due to their uncertainties about their own thoughts and feelings.**
3. They are insecure. They form **destructive relationships** that reflect and increase their essential lack of self-worth.

As a leader you can develop the right, healthy type of self-esteem by building on the following pillars:

1. **Be right with God.** Accept His power to change you in areas of your life that you are weak in and strengthen the areas that you are good in.
2. **Feed your mind with positive, good things** [Phil. 4:8] by reading good books, studying, listening to educational tapes, and so on. If you stop learning, you will stop growing. Start and end each day right - at night, feed your mind for the next day; in the morning, have a quiet time to vitalize you for the day, review and, if necessary, adjust your goals.

3. **Visualize what you want to become** and what it would be like if you already had become what you want to be. Affirm over and over again - positive self-talk. Verbalize what you want to be.

Assume the role - walk, talk, act, as though you have attained. We need to be constantly changing and developing our character. We will become the people we have as our role models. Be sure your role model is what God wants you to become.

4. **Live conscientiously.** Be aware of the consequences of what you are doing and the impact it has on your interests, values, goals and long range objectives. Be aware of the world within and the world around you.

5. **Be self-accepting.** Be respectful toward yourself and consciously refuse to reject yourself.

6. **Be responsible.** You must be aware of the fact that you are the author of your own choices and actions.

7. **Be self-assertive.** This means being willing to be who you are and allow others to see it - stand up for your convictions, values and feelings.

8. **Live purposefully.** Take responsibility for identifying your goals, keeping yourself on track, and moving toward their fulfilment.

9. **Live with integrity.** Keep principles of behaviour to which you remain loyal in your actions - for example, keeping your promises and commitments.

**You will become small as  
Your controlling desire;  
As great as your dominant aspiration.**  
[James Allen]

## **World-awareness**

We do not accept things as they are, but rather anticipate things as they can be. We participate in making things happen. We shape life, rather than being shaped by it. This dictum [statement of fact and principle] is borne out again and again... There is nothing you can do about your early life now, except to understand it. You can, however, do everything about the rest of your life. As John Gardner said, "The maturing of any

complex talent requires a happy combination of motivation, character and opportunity.  
**Most talent remains undeveloped.**

It's important to obtain some knowledge about the world out there to be an effective leader. You should be characterized as a person who does a lot of diversified reading, taking courses from time to time, accepting new experiences as stretching opportunities and travelling as much as possible.

You should see different cultures and peoples - they teach you to see things from a different perspective and to understand the deeper things of life much better. Travelling is characteristic of many good leaders and has helped them develop a rich private life.

*I took a good deal with his education, sir;  
[I] let me run the streets when he was very young, and shift for himself, It's the only  
way to make a boy sharp, sir. [Charles Dickens, Pickwick Papers]*

The above quote indicates that over-protection of our children, and our followers as well, can lead to a lack of knowledge essential to survive in life. Yet there needs to be balance; there needs to be guidance, instruction and training too.

## Intuitive

Some people may call it "instinct" or "hunch" or "intuitive instinct"; others "blessed impulse". But when the Holy Spirit controls a person, that "instinct" or "impulse" is used by Him to tell us what to do.

However, in saying the above, we need to use our God-given ability to reason clearly about matters and problems. This means being a good observer, receptive to new ideas and synthesizing (bringing it all together). You need to think in a logical and systematic manner. We need to keep balanced!

Sometimes God may ask us to do something which **may not seem logical at the moment**, but later we see His wisdom when we follow His leading. Using already learned knowledge and wisdom to solve problems and make decisions is necessary; having policies and procedures are important; yet these must all be used as tools and guidelines only - not masters - because we need to let God overrule and guide in a different direction **if He so chooses**.

## Teachable

A good leader is always a "learner". He doesn't know it all and he admits to it. He considers every mistake, bad decision and false step a learning opportunity, rather than the end of the world! In Ted Rendall's book, *In God's School*, he emphasizes that God

allows circumstances, events and experiences to be the training ground for future service. To be teachable is essential for a deeper personal relationship with God, with others and with yourself.

Have friends and mentors who come from different cultures as well as some who are close to you and who can see you in your day-to-day living when the mask is off. These can help you a lot to keep balanced and true.

Friends who tell you the truth are friends indeed. **I'm not talking about some who call themselves your "loving Friends" but are out to tear you to shreds at every opportunity hiding behind some religious shield and trying to stuff you into a mould they perceive you have to fit in order to be right or good or acceptable.** Even these kinds of "friends" serve you well by keeping you in the alert as to what will be their next attack on what you have done or not done!

Adversity out in the world is a great learning experience. Study, travel, people of different cultures, work, play, reflection all help us to increase our knowledge and understanding to be sharp. But, mistakes, failures, defeats, adversity, trials and tribulation are not so bad! They prove there must be some growth and progress! Yes, you blow it now and then but you are also developing a momentum and a pace that gets exciting and things start to happen. Mistakes make us look for those alternatives!

## Called

A Christian leader must be called by God for a particular purpose, mission and assignment. This calling will be his anchor when the turbulent storms of life attempt to overwhelm him.

If a leader does not love his work, then he has misinterpreted his calling. You can love something that is difficult, costly, challenging, painful, demanding, sometimes unreasonable, burdensome, etc.

it is easier to serve God without a vision, easier to work for God without call; because then you are not bothered by what GOD REQUIRES. Common sense in your guide, veneered over with Christian sentiment. But if once you receive a commission from Jesus Christ, the memory of WHAT GOD WANTS will always come like a goad; and you will no longer be able to work for on the common sense basis. (Oswald Chambers)

That's why Jesus said that His yoke is easy and His burden light. **He gives the love for that calling and responsibility.**



You may not even find yourself to be "happy"; you may even find that difficult situations cause discouragement, disappointment and a questioning of one's calling. God never promised "happiness" in every situation; He promised peace!

The philosopher Confucius once said, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life!"

**Do you find yourself questioning your call? Drill below the surface emotions and feelings to the depths of your soul and spend time there in the closet of your innermost being to determine what God wants you to do.** Your calling also requires good stewardship of your spiritual gifts, talents, abilities and skills [1 Peter 4:10]

## **Emotional Stability**

Another characteristic necessary in the leader is his emotional stability. He needs this in order to cope in the hectic daily living through all kinds of situations. This includes family, church, calling and work.

Amazing as it may seem, this stability will show itself in a lack of defensiveness. He doesn't have to be always defending himself or his actions; he is assured by God and His inner peace that he is following His orders and fulfilling His mandate.

## **Attractiveness**

Leaders should be characterized by a type of "attractiveness". I'm talking about your outward appearance as well as the inner "you".

When you MEET a man you judge him by his CLOTHES. When you LEAVE a man, you judge him by his HEART.

Do you exude a positive attitude?

Do you show interest in others?

Do you love, encourage and edify others?

**Do you refrain from "Gossip"?**

Do people always come away from you with a feeling that they learned something from you or were encouraged and edified?

Combine this with a freshness as to the way you keep yourself and you will uplift those you meet as you fulfil your leadership role.

# Balanced

A leader needs to work constantly to remain balanced. It simply is not easy! Balance in the areas of spiritual, family, marriage, financial, personal growth, physical, social and professional balance is not easy to maintain; yet we must seriously put some effort into it to be better leaders. We must not go to the extremes in our views; otherwise we build doctrines and rules which are not Biblically based (although we may sincerely think they are). The following are some matters which need balance.

## **Toughness and understanding (head and heart)**

The ability to be both understanding and yielding, particular on trivial matters which may not have much importance to someone else. Be tough, persistent and unyielding on important items where profits, growth, relationships and overall impact may be in danger. Keep personal emotions from impairing your ability to discern and rationalize. Do not allow tradition and status quo to keep you from maintaining this balance.

## **Knowledge and action (head and hands)**

A leader needs to maintain a balance between the intellectual knowledge and the practical outworking of that knowledge. The potential force of knowledge must be turned into an active force producing action and results. To have much knowledge and not act on that knowledge is pathetic.

## **Ethics and progress (heart and hands)**

The ability to both mix and separate (the ethical, emotional and spiritual) from the physical business aspects of any given situation is essential. One must recognize the necessity of ethics and Christian principles in business and utilize them to the fullest in the conduct of the business. This concept must not be allowed to cause you to run a "soft" business anymore than you would let business concepts "harden" your Christianity or ethics.

This takes the art of balance

## Summary

**REMEMBER:** DEVELOP THESE CHARACTERISTICS IN YOUR LIFE AS A LEADER MEANS PERSONAL GROWTH - AND THE SAME FOR THOSE AROUND YOU.

Leadership is characterized by and comes from a complex relationship existing between the LEADER (with a mix of the good characteristics we have been considering), the ORGANIZATION or team (with its clear purpose or mission statement), and the SOCIAL VALUES (culture, environment, religious).

Leaders should evaluate themselves from time to time and see what grade they can honestly give for their:

1. Proficiency and expertise
2. Quickness and responsiveness
3. Determination and Drive
4. Versatility and Adaptability
5. Communication Skills

Have someone else grade you and be honest and admit that they were more accurate and objective than what you were.

1 Tim. 3:2-7 is a good summary of character qualifications of a leader.

**1. He must have character that is beyond reproach.**

*His reputation needs to be exemplary*

**2. He must have one wife and be temperate.**

*This indicates that he must qualify morally to be a Christian leader.*

**3. He must be discreet, courteous, hospitable and a good teacher.**

*This reveals the qualifications to **interact effectively** with people.*

**4. He must not be a heavy drinker, not hot-tempered, but kind and peaceable.**

*This indicates the importance of **emotional stability***

**5. He must not be a lover of money.**

This reveals that his purpose in life must be to glorify God and to do what he asks him to do. **He must not become side-tracked from his calling.**

**6. He must be able to manage his family and household well.**

Some people have become defeated in their accomplishment of God's purpose for them because they married the wrong person. When they married, they took for granted they would have a "help-mate" but instead, they experienced severe opposition to what God called them to do. Unfortunately they have had to leave the ministry because of their spouses' rebellion against God and them. they failed to face the reality and implications of the man's and woman's individual callings before they married to determine if they could **fulfil God's calling together.**

**7. There needs to be maturity.**

*A person should be given responsibilities gradually after he becomes a Christian*

Take time to be alone to ensure you have a healthy, virile, private life - effective in private, effective in public - don't get behind in your "think time". You can be active but not accomplish, busy but barren

### **PRAYER FOR A FAMOUS LEADER**

**LORD, make me an instrument  
of your peace!**

**Where there is hatred,  
let me sow love,  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.**

**O DIVINE MASTER, grant that I  
may not so much seek  
to be consoled, as to console;  
to be understood,  
as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love.  
For it is in giving that  
we receive;  
It is in pardoning that  
we are pardoned;  
It is in dying that  
we are born to eternal life.**

**(Francis Assisi)**