

MAKE IT **COUNT**

A 10-week study for leadership teams by *Influence* magazine

Leading With the Fruit of the Spirit

By STEPHEN BLANDINO



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A 10-Week Study
For Leadership
Teams

What Is Make It Count?

Make It Count is a leadership development resource for use individually or with staff, volunteers, or board members.

Each installment is also available online as a downloadable PDF, along with interactive pages for group member use. The underlined words and phrases in the following text correspond to fill-in-the-blank sections on team member pages. Access these free resources at influencemagazine.com/Downloads.

These lessons are written by **STEPHEN BLANDINO**, lead pastor of 7 City Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and the author of several books.



Leading With the Fruit of the Spirit

By **STEPHEN BLANDINO**

While discipleship ministries often emphasize the fruit of the Spirit, it's easy to forget this teaching applies to leaders too.

Our culture tends to associate leadership with busyness, boldness, aggressiveness and assertiveness. When people think of leaders, words like “love,” “joy,” and “forbearance” may not spring immediately to mind.

Some might even consider it a weakness for leaders to exhibit traits like kindness, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness. Of course, that's not what Scripture teaches.



When leaders embrace, cultivate and model the fruit of the Spirit, they begin leading like Jesus – the greatest leader the world has ever known.

This installment of Make It Count is all about becoming more Christlike. The following 10 lessons explore the fruit of the Spirit from a leadership perspective:

1. **Leadership and the Fruit of the Spirit.** Leaders can't pick and choose when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit. They need all nine character traits, cultivated through regular fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

2. **Leading With Love.** Ministry is all about people. As author Jon Tyson notes, leaders must choose to love as they listen, observe, value, encourage and respond to others.

3. **Leading With Joy.** Joy is not a feeling that depends on outside circumstances. It's a choice we can make as we practice gratitude, cultivate healthy perspectives, and seek out positive people.

4. **Leading With Peace.** This kind of leadership must come from a *place of peace* and a *posture of peace*. We find a place of peace by spending time with God. A posture of peace then keeps us from bulldozing the people we lead.

5. **Leading With Patience.** Patience can bump against the desire for progress. However, patience is key to spiritual formation, improved relationships, and broader buy-in to the vision.

6. **Leading With Kindness.** Kind leaders are more than "nice." They express kindness by withholding judgment from those they lead and extending compassion to the people around them.

7. **Leading With Goodness.** Goodness denotes both benevolence and uprightness of heart. In other words, when we lead with goodness, we choose to *be good* and *do good*.

8. **Leading With Faithfulness.** We often equate faithfulness with showing up. Yet biblical faithfulness goes much deeper. When we lead with faithfulness, we model loyalty to God, wise stewardship of Kingdom resources, and consistency in our commitment.

9. **Leading With Gentleness.** This trait might seem weak, but gentleness requires strength of character. It involves submission of our will to God and a posture of humility before Him.

10. **Leading With Self-Control.** The ability to control one's appetites is essential to effective leadership. Without self-control, we'll make rash decisions, engage in unhealthy pursuits, and treat people with disrespect.

As you discuss and apply each lesson with your team, your leadership will begin to look more like Christ's. And you may notice a difference in your working relationships.

1

LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leadership and the Fruit of the Spirit

Assess

What role does the fruit of the Spirit play in leadership?

Insights and Ideas

What would summer be without fresh fruit? From juicy peaches to bright berries, the bounty of produce delights the senses and adds flavor to the season.

In Galatians 5, the apostle Paul described the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work within Christians as a kind of fruit — “the fruit of the Spirit” (verse 22). These Spirit-endowed traits flavor our lives with the nature of Christ.

What are those flavors? Galatians 5:22–23 says, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

These nine qualities have a profound effect on leaders. Leadership isn't just about what we do or whom we lead; it's about who we are.

To develop leadership marked by the fruit of the Spirit, keep two things in view:

1. *Leaders need the entirety of the fruit of the Spirit.* Paul listed nine distinct qualities. However, the fruit of the Spirit isn't like offerings on a salad bar. We don't get to pick and choose which bits we want and which ones we'll skip.

Too often we'd like a giant serving of peace, but we'd rather pass on the forbearance. We'll delight in the joy but ignore the self-control. As leaders, we need the entirety of the fruit infused into the entirety of our lives and ministries.

2. *Leaders need fellowship with the Spirit.* The fruit in Galatians 5:22–23 is not the result of our efforts. It's the fruit of the Holy Spirit, springing up in our lives in response to the Spirit's work. We don't produce fruit on our own but in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. As leaders, we must welcome His work in every aspect of our daily lives.

Leadership without the fruit of the Spirit is dangerous. Pride and folly grow, stunting the redemptive potential of the local church. But with the fruit of the Spirit, we're able to lead by example, love people, and bring glory to God.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Which quality of the fruit of the Spirit is your greatest struggle? Why?
2. What does it look like to have fellowship with the Holy Spirit?
3. How can our team be more intentional about becoming fruit-bearing disciples of Jesus?

Apply

To which fruit of the Spirit characteristic do you need to give more attention? Over the next month, start each day by welcoming the Spirit's presence and activity in your life. Then, at the end of each day, reflect on how well you cooperated with Him and how you can improve.

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Leadership and the Fruit of the Spirit

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What role does the fruit of the Spirit play in leadership?

The apostle Paul described the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work within Christians as a kind of fruit — “the fruit of the Spirit.”

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22–23).

Developing leadership marked by the fruit of the Spirit:

1. *Leaders need the _____ of the fruit of the Spirit.*

The fruit of the Spirit isn't like offerings on a salad bar. We don't get to pick and choose which bits we want and which ones we'll skip.

2. *Leaders need _____ with the Spirit.*

The fruit in Galatians 5:22–23 is not the result of our efforts. It's the fruit of the Holy Spirit, springing up in our lives in response to the Spirit's work. As leaders, we must welcome His work in every aspect of our daily lives.

Apply

To which fruit of the Spirit characteristic do you need to give more attention? Over the next month, start each day by welcoming the Spirit's presence and activity in your life. Then, at the end of each day, reflect on how well you cooperated with Him and how you can improve.

2 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Love

Team Review

How have you been responding to the Holy Spirit's work to cultivate His fruit in your life and leadership?

Assess

Why does our culture usually separate love from leadership?

Insights and Ideas

The apostle Paul begins with “love” as the first quality in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Dozens of times, the Bible refers to God's love as “unfailing.” For example, Psalm 13:5 says, “I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.” And Psalm 109:26 says, “Help me, LORD my God; save me according to your unfailing love.”

Leadership so often conditions us to perform, but God loves us even when we experience leadership failures. God also leads us with love. Exodus 15:13 says of God, “In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.”

If God leads with unfailing love, shouldn't we aim for the same standard? In *The Burden Is Light*, author and pastor Jon Tyson uses the word LOVER as an acronym for living and leading with love:

Listen. James 1:19 instructs us to be “quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” You've probably never felt loved by someone who wouldn't listen to you. How well do you listen to others?

Observe. First John 4:20 says, “Whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.” How well do you see the people around you — observing their hurts, fears and anxieties?

Value. Proverbs 14:31 says, “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.” Do you value people regardless of what they can or cannot do for you?

Encourage. Ephesians 4:29 says, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” How encouraging and helpful are your words?

Respond. First John 3:18 says, “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” Has your love moved from words to actions?

Reflect and Discuss

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, how well are you at leading with love?
2. Name an example of someone who leads with love. How does that person's love inspire you?
3. Reflecting on the LOVER acronym, which quality do you need to cultivate in your life?

Apply

Take the next week in your personal quiet time to look up “love” in your Bible's concordance. Make a list of your observations about love from each verse you read. Then reflect on how you can lead with love and how you can better *listen*, *observe*, *value*, *encourage* and *respond* to the people you lead.

2 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Love

Asses

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“In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling” (Exodus 15:13).

In *The Burden Is Light*, author and pastor Jon Tyson uses the word LOVER as an acronym for living and leading with love:

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“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (James 1:19).

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“Whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen” (1 John 4:20).

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“Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God” (Proverbs 14:31).

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Apply

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3

LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Joy

Team Review

How have you led with love over the past week?

Assess

How have you seen joy expressed in the lives of leaders?

Insights and Ideas

Joy is not solely about events that warrant celebration. Joy comes from knowing God and trusting in His plan.

Despite His suffering, Jesus maintained an eternal perspective. Hebrews 12:2 says, “For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Jesus focused on the joy beyond the Cross.

Leadership is hard. The most challenging problems always rise to the leader. But even in the face of hardships, we can experience joy in Christ.

Here are three ways to lead with joy:

1. *Keep a gratitude journal.* A growing body of research suggests this practice has a positive effect on mental and physical well-being. One study even found that keeping a gratitude journal for eight weeks can improve cardiovascular health. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Paul said, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” This isn’t always easy. There are some circumstances in which gratitude doesn’t come naturally. But regularly expressing gratitude conditions us to look for joy — even when circumstances are difficult.
2. *Cultivate perspective.* Author J. Robert Clinton observed that the difference between followers and leaders is perspective, and the difference between leaders and better leaders is *greater* perspective. The more your perspective is centered on Christ, the more you’ll see circumstances through a lens of faith. Rather than rising and falling with the ups and downs of life and leadership, you can find joy in every season.
3. *Seek out positive people.* In leadership, you need people who will speak truth to you and help you grow. But these same people should also love you, believe in you, and speak life into you. Joy isn’t solely circumstantial; therefore, you need to guard against negativity.

If you’re going to lead with joy, you need to keep your spiritual and emotional tanks full. When you become drained and defeated, depressed and despondent, it’s harder to lead with joy and be a source of joy to the people around you.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What does biblical joy mean to you?
2. Can you give an example from your past of finding joy in Christ when you faced a difficult situation?
3. Which of the three suggestions for leading with joy do you find most helpful? Why?

Apply

Implement the three steps to leading with joy. Start a gratitude journal by writing down two or three things for which you’re thankful each day. Cultivate perspective by choosing a specific situation you’re facing right now, viewing it from an eternal perspective, and articulating in writing a response that reflects joy. Finally, seek out positive people who will regularly speak into your life.

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Three ways to lead with joy:

1. *Keep a _____ journal.*

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thesalonians 5:18).

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Apply

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4 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Peace

Team Review

How have you led with joy over the past week?

Assess

What does leading with peace mean to you?

Insights and Ideas

Peace seems elusive amid the tension and chaos of our world. But as we welcome the work of the Spirit in our lives, we will bear the fruit of peace internally and externally.

Leading with peace is essential, especially in unsettling times. During such times, people often look to their leaders for answers.

In those moments, they need leaders who are doing the following:

1. *Leading from a place of peace.* Leaders often lead through pain and uncertainty, as the past two years have demonstrated. In these times, leaders need *internal peace* to combat *external pressure*.

Without internal peace, leaders will be crushed under the weight of worry and the heaviness of hardship. Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 3:16, “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.”

Our daily connection to the Prince of Peace enables us to lead from a place of peace. If we aren’t at peace internally, we’re more likely to feel stress and even perpetuate conflict.

2. *Leading with a posture of peace.* Some leaders try to fulfill their vision through bullying. Their aggressive posture has a way of bulldozing people who might see things from a different perspective.

That is not God’s way, however. Romans 12:18 reminds us, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” Good leaders don’t leave peace to happenstance. They have the ability to stay focused on their vision while simultaneously cultivating peace in relationships. And when conflict does arise, good leaders approach it with the right spirit, so peace is a more likely outcome.

Peace should mark our lives and our leadership. It should be our attitude and our aim. Romans 14:19 says, “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”

Reflect and Discuss

1. Can you think of a time when you were able to lead from a place of peace in the midst of a trying situation?
2. How do you maintain a posture of peace when dealing with an irate or disagreeable person?
3. How can leaders remain true to their God-inspired vision while simultaneously fostering peace in relationships?

Apply

On a scale from 1 to 10, how well do you lead from a place of peace? Identify two things you can do to foster deeper peace in your soul. Then consider how well you lead with a posture of peace. What are two things you can do to maintain the right spirit when pursuing a bold vision or leading through conflict?

4 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Peace

Assess

What does leading with peace mean to you?

Peace seems elusive amid the tension and chaos of our world. But as we welcome the work of the Spirit in our lives, we will bear the fruit of peace internally and externally.

Two keys to leading with peace:

1. *Leading from a _____ of peace.*

Leaders often lead through pain and uncertainty, as the past two years have demonstrated. In these times, leaders need *internal peace* to combat *external pressure*.

“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you” (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

2. *Leading with a _____ of peace.*

Some leaders try to fulfill their vision through bullying. Their aggressive posture has a way of bulldozing people who might see things from a different perspective.

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18).

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Apply

On a scale from 1 to 10, how well do you lead from a place of peace? Identify two things you can do to foster deeper peace in your soul. Then consider how well you lead with a posture of peace. What are two things you can do to maintain the right spirit when pursuing a bold vision or leading through conflict?

5 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Patience

Team Review

How have you led with peace over the past week?

Assess

How have you seen patience prove beneficial in leadership?

Insights and Ideas

Forbearance is the fourth quality in Paul’s fruit of the Spirit description. A common synonym is “patience.”

Traffic lights, slow internet speeds, and long drive-thru lines can make us feel impatient. However, Paul isn’t talking about patience with things as much as patience with people — or restraint in the face of provocation. In other words, we don’t lash out in anger when someone tests our patience. Some Bible translations use the word “longsuffering.”

This can be challenging for many leaders. Leaders tend to have a bias toward action, and most of us feel like our goals should have been reached yesterday ... or yesteryear.

Nevertheless, patience is critical to effective leadership. Here are three reasons why:

1. *Patience forms the leader.* Colossians 3:12 includes patience in a rather noble list of character traits: “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

As leaders, we like to form visions, but God likes to form hearts. Allowing Him to fully form and shape us will give us the inner resources to endure when we’re tested by the biggest leadership storms. This formation process takes time.

2. *Patience improves relationships.* Leadership is about relationships. And relationships are rarely efficient. Strong relationships require investments of time. To lead with long-term impact, you need to exercise patience so those relationships can ultimately flourish. Ephesians 4:2 says, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”

3. *Patience fosters broader buy-in to the vision.* Catching vision and casting vision don’t move at the same speed. You might catch a vision in a day, but casting that vision could take days, weeks or even months. Patience means more meetings and more time to answer questions, but in the end, you’ll usually foster broader buy-in to the vision.

Proverbs 25:15 says, “Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.” *The Message* puts it this way: “Patient persistence pierces through indifference; gentle speech breaks down rigid defenses.”

Going slowly at first will eventually allow you to move quickly when it most counts.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Can you share an example of how having patience — or a lack of patience — impacted your ability to lead people?
2. What situations has God used to form patience in you?
3. Which of the three reasons for developing patience in leadership most resonates with you? Why?

Apply

Reflect on the three points in this lesson. Which one needs the most attention from you right now? Do you need to yield to the Spirit’s character formation process? Do you need to apologize to someone for being impatient? Do you need to slow the pace of your vision casting to allow more time for people to catch it? Identify your next step, and then practice leading with patience.

5 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

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How have you seen patience prove beneficial in leadership?

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Three reasons to lead with patience:

1. *Patience forms the* _____.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12).

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Leadership is about relationships. And relationships are rarely efficient.

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2).

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Catching vision and casting vision don't move at the same speed. You might catch a vision in a day, but casting that vision could take days, weeks or even months.

"Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone" (Proverbs 25:15).

"Patient persistence pierces through indifference; gentle speech breaks down rigid defenses" (Proverbs 25:15, *The Message*).

Apply

Reflect on the three points in this lesson. Which one needs the most attention from you right now? Do you need to yield to the Spirit's character formation process? Do you need to apologize to someone for being impatient? Do you need to slow the pace of your vision casting to allow more time for people to catch it? Identify your next step, and then practice leading with patience.

6

LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Kindness

Team Review

How have you led with patience over the past week?

Assess

What does being a kind leader mean to you?

Insights and Ideas

Kindness goes a long way in relationships. Kind people extend grace and respect. They serve with humility, celebrating and valuing the contributions of others. They are encouraging and caring.

Mother Teresa once said, “Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be a living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting.”

Imagine the kind of impact we could make if we led that way.

Consider two expressions of leading with kindness:

1. *Lead with kindness by what you withhold.* God’s kindness and grace open the door to repentance and salvation. As His people, we should not judge others harshly. Instead, we should choose kindness as we point people to Him.

Romans 2:1–4 says, “You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?”

Rather than condemning and criticizing, kindness pulls back the judgment and leans forward with grace. This isn’t easy, especially when we’ve been hurt, but we take the high road when we withhold judgment.

2. *Lead with kindness by what you extend.* Leading with kindness isn’t just about what we withhold. It’s also about what we extend. Proverbs 19:17 says, “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.” Kindness to the poor is often modeled by the generosity we extend. In giving generously to those in need, we lend to God.

Ephesians 4:32 provides another example: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Christ withheld judgment and extended compassion. We should do the same. Through acts of compassion, we can help those we lead.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Can you share a time when a leader was kind to you by withholding judgment?
2. What does it look like to extend kindness to the people you lead?
3. What are two behaviors our team can intentionally model to cultivate kindness?

Apply

From whom do you need to withhold judgment? What can you do to extend kindness instead?

6

LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Kindness

Assess

What does being a kind leader mean to you?

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be a living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting.” — Mother Teresa

Two ways to lead with kindness:

1. *Lead with kindness by what you* _____.

“You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?” (Romans 2:1–4).

2. *Lead with kindness by what you* _____.

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done” (Proverbs 19:17).

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Christ withheld judgment and extended compassion. We should do the same. Through acts of compassion, we can help those we lead.

Apply

From whom do you need to withhold judgment? What can you do to extend kindness instead?

7 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Goodness

Team Review

How have you led with kindness over the past week?

Assess

How would you define goodness?

Insights and Ideas

The sixth quality mentioned in the fruit of the spirit is “goodness.” People often think of goodness as benevolence or good deeds. However, it’s also moral character that emphasizes uprightness of heart.

There are two ways to lead with goodness:

1. *Lead with goodness by being good.* Leaders have a responsibility to lead by example. The apostle Paul told a young leader named Timothy, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). Notice, Paul implored Timothy to lead by example in five areas: speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.

Speech is about what we say and how we talk. Conduct is about our integrity and behavior. Love is about our relationships with God and people. Faith is about our trust in God and His Word. And purity is about our morals. As leaders, we are called to model goodness by *being* the kind of leader Paul describes.

Too often leaders would rather *look* good. But as author Bob Goff once said, “We plant sod where God wants us to plant seed. He’s more interested in growing our character than having us look finished.”

2. *Lead with goodness by doing good.* Not only should we *be* good, but we should also *do* good. Paul said, “We are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). Notice, we were created to “do good works,” and these good works were determined before we were even born.

In 2 Corinthians 9:8, Paul said, “God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” When we lead with goodness, we prioritize doing the greatest good with what God has given us.

God has entrusted you with gifts, abilities, skills, influence, money and time. How are you using those resources to serve people and advance His kingdom? Are you leading for your own gain, or are you leading for the good of others?

Leaders lead by who they are and what they do. *Being* and *doing* are within our control. Healthy leaders choose to model goodness as they welcome the good work of the Holy Spirit.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What area of “being good” — speech, conduct, love, faith or purity — do you find most challenging? Why?
2. What are the good works you feel God has called you to do?
3. What is a practical way to lead with goodness in your current ministry context?

Apply

Leading by being is all about character. What part of your character needs more attention? Leading by doing is all about the good you bring about in the world. What steps can you take this week to accomplish the good works to which God has called you?

7 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Goodness

Assess

How would you define goodness?

The sixth quality mentioned in the fruit of the spirit is “goodness.” People often think of goodness as benevolence or good deeds. However, it’s also moral character that emphasizes uprightness of heart.

Two ways to lead with goodness:

1. *Lead with goodness by _____ good.*

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

“We plant sod where God wants us to plant seed. He’s more interested in growing our character than having us look finished.” — Bob Goff

2. *Lead with goodness by _____ good.*

“We are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).

“God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8).

When we lead with goodness, we prioritize doing the greatest good with what God has given us.

Apply

Leading by being is all about character. What part of your character needs more attention? Leading by doing is all about the good you bring about in the world. What steps can you take this week to accomplish the good works to which God has called you? allocate as much time as possible to your mission-aligned priorities.

8

LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Faithfulness

Team Review

How have you led with goodness over the past week?

Assess

How would you define faithfulness in the context of leadership?

Insights and Ideas

When people hear the word “faithfulness” in church, they often think about somebody who is always there — signing up for volunteer opportunities and never missing a service. In other words, we equate faithfulness with presence. But the concept of faithfulness goes much deeper than just showing up.

Faithfulness is the result of a growing faith in God. If faith were a tree, faithfulness would be the fruit.

To lead with faithfulness, we need three qualities:

1. **Loyalty.** Faithfulness comes from the Greek word *pistis*, which implies moral conviction, belief, trustworthiness, loyalty, reliability and fidelity. Simply put, a faithful person possesses a single-minded loyalty to God.

James describes the person who asks God for wisdom while harboring doubt as “double-minded and unstable in all they do” (James 1:8). Faithful leaders aren’t double-minded. Instead, they are single-minded in loyalty and love for God.

2. **Stewardship.** The Parable of the Bags of Gold is a powerful example of faithfulness. When the master returned home, he said to two of his servants, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” (Matthew 25:21,23). But he called the third servant “wicked” and “lazy” (verse 26).

What was the difference? Stewardship. The first two servants were wise stewards of the master’s resources. The third servant was foolish. The parable had nothing to do with the amount each person received and everything to do with stewardship.

God will hold leaders accountable for the resources He entrusts to us, however great or small. If we want Him to consider us faithful, we must steward those resources wisely.

3. **Consistency.** Proverbs 28:20 says, “A faithful person will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.” Consistency is better than any get-rich-quick scheme. There is no shortcut to success.

As unattractive as consistency might sound, it’s one of the most powerful traits of people who make the widest and deepest impact. Through trials and triumphs, such people never quit.

Author Jim Collins once said, “The signature of mediocrity is chronic inconsistency.”

Reflect and Discuss

1. What does loyalty to God look like?
2. What are three things our team could do to steward our time, talent and treasure more wisely?
3. How have you seen consistency pay off in your life and leadership?

Apply

Reflect on the three expressions of faithfulness: loyalty, stewardship and consistency. In which area do you most need improvement? Take a few minutes to create a growth plan, and then find someone to hold you accountable.

8

LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Faithfulness

Assess

How would you define faithfulness in the context of leadership?

The concept of faithfulness goes much deeper than just showing up.

Three qualities for leading with faithfulness:

1. _____.

Faithfulness comes from the Greek word *pistis*, which implies moral conviction, belief, trustworthiness, loyalty, reliability and fidelity. Simply put, a faithful person possesses a single-minded loyalty to God.

James describes the person who asks God for wisdom while harboring doubt as “double-minded and unstable in all they do” (James 1:8).

2. _____.

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” (Matthew 25:21,23).

In the Parable of the Bags of Gold, the first two servants were wise stewards of the master’s resources. The third servant was foolish. The parable had nothing to do with the amount each person received and everything to do with stewardship.

3. _____.

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As unattractive as consistency might sound, it’s one of the most powerful traits of people who make the widest and deepest impact. Through trials and triumphs, such people never quit.

“The signature of mediocrity is chronic inconsistency.” — Jim Collins

Apply

Reflect on the three expressions of faithfulness: loyalty, stewardship and consistency. In which area do you most need improvement? Take a few minutes to create a growth plan, and then find someone to hold you accountable.

9

LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Gentleness

Team Review

How have you led with faithfulness over the past week?

Assess

How do the words “gentleness” and “leadership” go together?

Insights and Ideas

When people think of leadership, “gentleness” may not come to mind. In fact, it probably wouldn’t show up on a list of the top 1,000 words to describe leadership. We tend to think of gentleness as mild, subdued and perhaps even weak, while leadership is usually seen as bold, aggressive and strong.

However, a closer look at Scripture reveals this is an erroneous understanding. Gentleness isn’t weakness; it is meekness. The apostle Paul included gentleness in a list of character qualities for “God’s chosen people” (Colossians 3:12).

Two qualities are at the heart of leading with gentleness:

1. **Submission.** Leading with gentleness begins with a posture of submission. Rather than wielding our strength and power over others, a gentle person chooses to submit to God, His Word, and His will.

This isn’t always easy, especially when we feel justified in putting others in their place. When we feel hurt or criticized, we may also feel entitled to leverage power for personal gain. But leading with gentleness submits those perceived entitlements to the lordship of Christ.

Galatians 6:1 says, “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.” And Proverbs 15:1 says, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

2. **Humility.** Gentle leaders aren’t ego driven. They aren’t obsessed with power, perks, privilege or pride. Humble leaders aren’t consumed with building a name for themselves. Instead, they walk in a spirit of humility that enables them to be gentle with others.

Jesus described it this way: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25–28).

This combination of submission and humility is what makes gentleness an indispensable quality in leadership.

Our culture seldom celebrates gentleness, but Scripture does. Leading with gentleness requires intentionality and surrender to Christ.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What is a practical example of leading with gentleness?
2. How have you seen submission and humility contribute to leadership in a healthy way?
3. What steps do you need to take to lead with gentleness?

Apply

The closer you walk with Christ, the more you will resemble Him. Spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you lead with gentleness.

9

LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Gentleness

Assess

How do the words “gentleness” and “leadership” go together?

When people think of leadership, “gentleness” may not come to mind. We tend to think of gentleness as mild, subdued and perhaps even weak, while leadership is usually seen as bold, aggressive and strong.

Gentleness isn’t weakness; it is meekness. The apostle Paul included gentleness in a list of character qualities for “God’s chosen people” (Colossians 3:12).

Two qualities are at the heart of leading with gentleness:

1. _____

A gentle person chooses to submit to God, His Word, and His will.

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted” (Galatians 6:1).

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).

2. _____

Gentle leaders aren’t ego driven. They aren’t obsessed with power, perks, privilege or pride. Humble leaders aren’t consumed with building a name for themselves. Instead, they walk in a spirit of humility.

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25–28).

Apply

The closer you walk with Christ, the more you will resemble Him. Spend some time in prayer, asking God to help you lead with gentleness.

10 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Self-Control

Team Review

How have you led with gentleness over the past week?

Assess

In what ways does self-control impact leadership?

Insights and Ideas

When you skip a meal, it doesn't take long before your stomach starts to growl. You might even feel a bit weak or irritated. It's not until you satisfy your appetite that you feel content again.

Appetites aren't restricted to food, however. A desire for power, money, recognition, or short-term satisfaction can quickly become a driving force in people's lives. This is why self-control is vital. We exercise self-control to master our appetites. If leaders don't master their appetites, it's only a matter of time before they — and those they lead — experience the consequences and fallout.

Self-control is so important for leaders that the apostle Paul included it in his list of qualifications for elders (Titus 1:8). But here's the good news: God's grace empowers us to lead with self-control. Titus 2:12–14 says God's grace “teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”

Self-control isn't simply a matter of willpower. God's grace trains us to live in a self-controlled way. To gauge your own level of self-control in leadership, rate yourself in the following areas on a scale from 1 to 5:

- I demonstrate consistency in my moods and temperament that makes it easy for others to work with me.
- I have clearly defined boundaries, systems and accountability to help me keep my appetites under control.
- I don't overreact under pressure or when making high-stakes decisions.
- I have mentors who help me process leadership challenges, make wise decisions, and exercise healthy leadership.
- I trust God's timing rather than chasing the latest ideas or searching for silver bullets to create rapid growth.
- I've clarified and communicated a ministry strategy that keeps our team focused and engaged.
- I treat team members with respect, dignity and compassion.
- I model humility and teachability when it comes to being more self-controlled.

How did you do? Let these questions guide you toward a deeper life of self-control so that you can lead for the long haul.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What were your greatest takeaways from this lesson on self-control?
2. What appetites do leaders tend to struggle with the most?
3. How did you rate yourself in each of the areas above? In which areas do you need to grow?

Apply

Reflect on your ratings above. Put together a plan to grow in the two areas where you rated yourself lowest. If you are willing, ask someone who knows you well to rate you in each area, and then put together a plan to improve.

10 | LEADING WITH THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Leading With Self-Control

Assess

In what ways does self-control impact leadership?

We exercise self-control to _____ our appetites.

Titus 2:12–14 says God’s grace “teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”

Self-control isn’t simply a matter of _____. God’s _____ trains us to live in a self-controlled way.

Gauge your level of self-control in leadership (scale from 1 to 5):

- I demonstrate _____ in my moods and temperament that makes it easy for others to work with me.
- I have clearly defined _____, _____ and _____ to help me keep my appetites under control.
- I don’t _____ under pressure or when making high-stakes decisions.
- I have _____ who help me process leadership challenges, make wise decisions, and exercise healthy leadership.
- I trust God’s timing rather than chasing the latest _____ or searching for _____ to create rapid growth.
- I’ve clarified and communicated a ministry _____ that keeps our team focused and engaged.
- I treat team members with _____, dignity and compassion.
- I model _____ and _____ when it comes to being more self-controlled.

Apply

Reflect on your ratings above. Put together a plan to grow in the two areas where you rated yourself lowest. If you are willing, ask someone who knows you well to rate you in each area, and then put together a plan to improve.