

Influence  
MAGAZINE

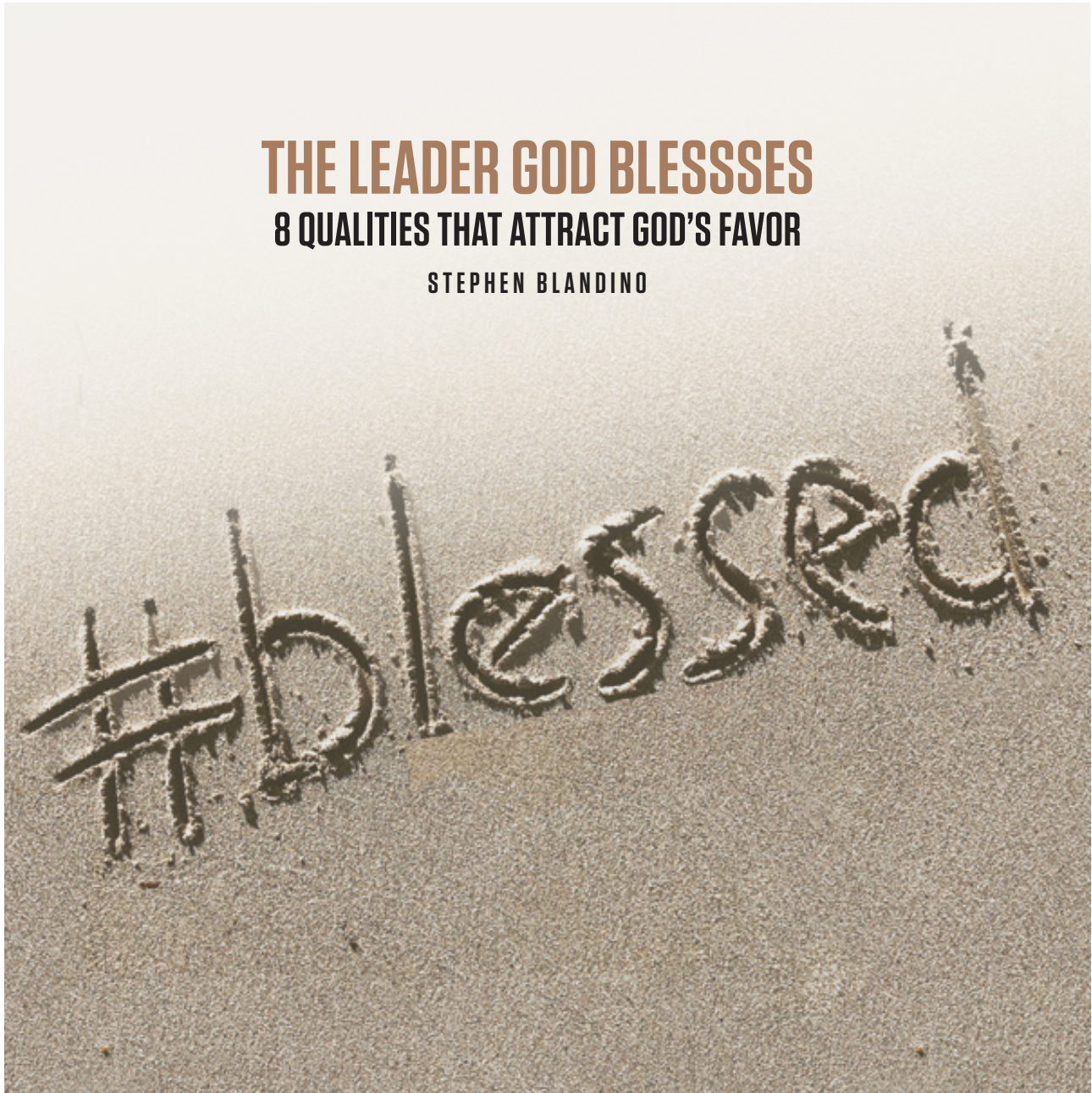
**MAKE IT COUNT**

An eight-week study  
for leadership teams

# THE LEADER GOD BLESSES

## 8 QUALITIES THAT ATTRACT GOD'S FAVOR

STEPHEN BLANDINO



**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

## The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Spiritual Leader

**Assess:** What causes a leader to drift toward spiritual poverty?

## Insights and Ideas

**I**n Matthew 5, Jesus takes us on a journey into the Beatitudes. As we will see, each Beatitude has powerful application for leaders today. The word beatitude means “blessedness,” and Jesus begins by saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

Jesus isn’t talking about physical poverty, but rather spiritual poverty. Simply put, Jesus is saying, “Those who are blessed are those who admit that without God they are spiritually impoverished.” This is the starting point for a spiritual leader.

Another translation of Matthew 5:3 says, “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs” (NLT).

This Beatitude reminds spiritual leaders of three truths:

1. *Spiritual leaders recognize their poverty without God.* The Beatitudes are not the only place we see spiritual poverty illustrated. In John 15:5, Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” I don’t believe it’s an accident that Jesus began with this Beatitude. If you cannot recognize your spiritual poverty without God, you will always compete with Him for first place. That’s dangerous for all of us, and especially dangerous for leaders who exert influence on others.
2. *Spiritual leaders remain connected to God.* Jesus said, “Remain in me, as I also remain in you” (John 15:4). Jesus was relational before He was transactional, and He calls us to follow the same pattern.

When widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food, the apostles said, “Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:3–4). The apostles’ priority was their *connection* and their *calling*. Their connection to God was found in giving “attention to prayer,” and their calling from God was found in “the ministry of the word.” The connection empowered the calling.

3. *Spiritual leaders realize fruit bearing is possible only with God.* The first two points produce a natural byproduct — *bearing fruit*. Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Spiritual leaders realize fruit bearing doesn’t start with the fruit; it starts with our relationship with God.

Leaders walk into the danger zone when they try to be rich in ministry without also being poor in spirit. Richness of ministry is empowered by poorness of spirit. In other words, when we admit our spiritual poverty without God, we become vessels He can fill with His Spirit and empower for His purposes.

## Reflect and Discuss

1. Why is being “poor in spirit” so important for spiritual leaders?
2. What are the biggest challenges for leaders when it comes to remaining connected with God?
3. How have you seen or experienced the connection between fruit bearing and remaining in Christ?

## Apply

Take a few minutes in prayer and worship, acknowledging your spiritual poverty without God. Then recommit yourself to remaining in Christ and inviting His Spirit to bear fruit in you and through you.

## The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

**The Spiritual Leader**

**Assess:** What causes a leader to drift toward spiritual poverty?

In Matthew 5, Jesus takes us on a journey into the Beatitudes. As we will see, each Beatitude has powerful application for leaders today. The word *beatitude* means “blessedness.”

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

Those who are blessed are those who admit that without God they are spiritually impoverished.

Three truths about spiritual leaders:

1. *Spiritual leaders recognize their \_\_\_\_\_ without God.*  
“Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

2. *Spiritual leaders remain \_\_\_\_\_ to God.*  
“Remain in me, as I also remain in you” (John 15:4).

“Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:3–4).

3. *Spiritual leaders realize \_\_\_\_\_ is possible only with God.*

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Richness of \_\_\_\_\_ is empowered by poorness of \_\_\_\_\_. In other words, when we admit our spiritual poverty without God, we become vessels He can fill with His Spirit and empower for His purposes.

**Apply**

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## The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Repentant Leader

**Team Review:** How have you been refreshed in your commitment to remain in Christ?

**Assess:** Why is repentance so important for a leader?

## Insights and Ideas

**T**he Beatitudes in Matthew 5 remind us of the character Jesus calls us to cultivate in our lives. Without these qualities, leaders can multiply the deceptive lure of sin and use influence in destructive ways. The second Beatitude Jesus shared gets right to the heart of this issue. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matthew 5:4). Commentators note that mourning here connotes repentance, and the comfort God offers is forgiveness for the penitent.

Simply put, God blesses those whose sorrow for their sin leads them to repent. Paul further described this sorrow in 2 Corinthians 7:10: “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”

Repentance may not be a fun topic to discuss, but a heart that is sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s correction and quick to repent is crucial in leadership. Consider these three truths:

1. *Repentant leaders admit their failures.* Repentant leaders are quick to admit when they’ve blown it. They don’t make excuses, cast blame or neglect their responsibilities. Instead, repentant leaders ask for forgiveness when they’ve treated somebody poorly, made a bad decision, broken trust with the team, or acted in a way that is inconsistent with their values. People will follow leaders who admit mistakes and seek to walk with a pure heart before God.
2. *Repentant leaders welcome feedback.* Feedback shows up in three ways: accountability, assessment and advice. First, repentant leaders are willing to be held accountable by other leaders and to submit to structures that help the organization maintain healthy boundaries and practices. Second, repentant leaders are willing to be assessed by coaches and consultants and through annual reviews. Finally, repentant leaders welcome advice from leaders, teams and others in the congregation. To “repent” implies change, and leaders won’t change if they are closed to these three forms of feedback.
3. *Repentant leaders make hard changes.* The word “repent” means to turn around and go in a new direction. Repentant leaders make hard changes — personally and organizationally — that lead to life and produce greater measures of health.

As hard as it is to mourn, we must remember that God “blesses” leaders whose sorrow for their sin leads them to repentance. Sometimes those sins are personal, while other times those sins are organizational.

## Reflect and Discuss

1. When was a time you admitted a failure to your team or another leader? How did that group or individual respond?
2. To which form of feedback are you most resistant: accountability, assessment or advice? Why?
3. What’s the hardest change you’ve ever had to make (personally or organizationally)?

## Apply

Is there an area of your life where you need to “mourn” (where your sorrow needs to lead to repentance)? Maybe it’s personally or organizationally. Spend some time with the Lord, invite Him to search your heart, and then make the hard choice to change in response to His direction.

The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Repentant Leader

**Assess:** Why is repentance so important for a leader?

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“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Why people follow repentant leaders:

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## The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Humble Leader

**Team Review:** What changes did you to make after our discussion on the repentant leader?

**Assess:** Why are we drawn to humble leaders?

## Insights and Ideas

**O**ne of the most important qualities a leader can possess is humility. That's the focus of Jesus' next Beatitude. He said, "Blessed *are* the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). Another translation says, "God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth" (Matthew 5:5, NLT).

Leaders are regularly confronted with the temptation to view themselves more highly than they should. Praises, accolades, and achievements can quickly make us think we're better than we actually are. And leaders face the temptation to use their power for personal gain. But again, God blesses the humble leader. How?

1. *Humble leaders experience God's grace.* First Peter 5:5 says, "In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.'" Grace is God's unmerited favor; humility is how we attract it.
2. *Humble leaders receive God's promotion.* Peter continues: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time" (1 Peter 5:6). And Jesus said, "For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 14:11). The key is to trust God with His timing for the promotion.
3. *Humble leaders exhibit God's wisdom.* One of the most important things a leader can pray for is wisdom (James 1:5). While prayer is the *pathway* to gain wisdom, humility is the *posture* that attracts wisdom. Proverbs 11:2 says, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom."
4. *Humble leaders attract God's favor.* Favor is not something we can demand. The only thing we can do is position ourselves to receive favor as God chooses to give it. Humility is how we position ourselves for favor. Proverbs 3:34 says, "He mocks proud mockers but shows favor to the humble and oppressed."
5. *Humble leaders experience God's riches, honor and life.* Proverbs 22:4 says, "Humility is the fear of the LORD; its wages are riches and honor and life."

There are clear benefits to becoming a humble leader, but it starts with submission and obedience to God.

## Reflect and Discuss

1. What's the hardest part of becoming a humble leader?
2. How can humility strengthen your relationship with your leader, your co-workers, and those you lead?
3. What are practical steps a leader can take to become humble?

## Apply

Do an autopsy on your propensity toward pride. Ask yourself three questions: *In what situations do I let my pride swell? How do I need to bring my power under Christ's control? How has my pride hurt others?* Then develop three strategies to counter this temptation and cultivate a spirit of humility.

The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Humble Leader

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How God blesses humble leaders:

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## Study 4

## The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Hungry Leader

**Team Review:** What's a practical step you discovered to help you cultivate a spirit of humility?

**Assess:** How can a leader foster a deeper hunger for righteousness?

## Insights and Ideas

**S**ometimes leaders experience temptations that demand a compromise in integrity. These defining moments are not easy, and at times they come with a high price. In the next Beatitude, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

God wants to pour more of His righteousness into our lives. But He is looking for those who are hungry for His presence, those who are seeking Him wholeheartedly.

The question you have to wrestle with is, *Just how hungry am I?* How hungry are you for God's righteousness, God's presence, and God's grace and peace? Do you just want a taste, or are you truly hungry for what God alone can supply? There are three qualities of spiritually hungry leaders:

1. *Hungry leaders have an unapologetic priority.* What is the priority of hungry leaders? Seeking God! These leaders hunger and thirst for righteousness and are unapologetic about what matters most. Nothing distracts, derails or diminishes that priority and the pursuit to see it fully realized.
2. *Hungry leaders have an unwavering passion.* Hungry leaders aren't satisfied with just a small taste of what God has to offer. Hungry leaders have a deep, unwavering, unflinching, all-consuming passion for the Lord. That hunger drives them to pursue their highest priority wholeheartedly.
3. *Hungry leaders have an unrelenting persistence.* Hungry leaders keep coming to the table of righteousness for more of God.

Are you a hungry leader? Is your priority for knowing and seeking the Lord coupled with passion and persistence? God blesses those who hunger and thirst for His righteousness.

## Reflect and Discuss

1. When was a time your hunger and thirst for God lost its edge? How did you rekindle the passion?
2. What are the biggest distractions you face in keeping your passion for the Lord alive?
3. How do you think God blesses those who hunger and thirst for righteousness?

## Apply

On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you rank your hunger for righteousness right now? What would it look like for you to feed that hunger and increase your appetite for the Lord? What step will you take to increase your hunger this week?



Study  
4  
TEAM GUIDE

The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Hungry Leader

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## The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Merciful Leader

**Team Review:** What have you done in the past week to increase your hunger for God and His righteousness?

**Assess:** How do leaders tend to show mercy?

## Insights and Ideas

**P** eople often think of mercy and leadership as traits that reside on opposite ends of a spectrum. Most have heard of — and many have encountered — merciless leaders who leveraged their power and authority to abuse others, pad their own pockets, and create corrupt systems that hurt innocent people. That wasn't Jesus' approach. Instead, He said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

Mercy goes beyond just feeling pity. It's sympathy in action. It's seeing a person's need for compassion and then doing something about it.

Leaders have a particular responsibility when it comes to mercy. Because leaders have influence, they have the opportunity to use their power and position to multiply mercy. When leaders infuse mercy into their influence, they can make life better — not just for one, but for many.

Ministers can show those who are watching that leadership and mercy *should* go together as they follow Jesus' example, intentionally cultivate mercy, and apply their influence to situations that require mercy.

Remember that mercy requires action, so look for opportunities to act mercifully. Start by asking several questions:

- Who in my family needs a little extra mercy? What would be a meaningful way for me to show that mercy?
- To whom in our church do I need to show mercy today?
- What member of our team is in need of my mercy?
- What problem in our community needs the help of a merciful leader?
- What would be a practical expression of mercy that I could extend to meet a need in our world?
- What ministry could we support that is showing mercy to the most vulnerable in our world?

Being a merciful leader doesn't mean you're a pushover or that you lack backbone. Being a merciful leader doesn't mean you don't hold people accountable, or you don't have high standards of quality or expect people to meet deadlines. Being a merciful leader is about choosing to forgive and show compassion. Being a merciful leader is about leveraging influence and resources to relieve suffering, solve problems and make the world a better place.

## Reflect and Discuss

1. When was a time a leader showed you mercy? How did it feel, and what lessons did you learn from that encounter?
2. How do we become merciful leaders without becoming spineless leaders?
3. How can you leverage your influence in a merciful way to meet needs in your community?

## Apply

Is there a person or situation in your family, church, community or world in need of an extra dose of mercy? What could you do to act as a merciful leader and provide compassion and kindness where it is most needed?

The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Merciful Leader

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Mercy goes beyond just feeling pity. It's sympathy in action.

Leaders have a particular responsibility when it comes to mercy. Because leaders have influence, they have the opportunity to use their power and position to multiply mercy.

Questions to consider:

- Who in my \_\_\_\_\_ needs a little extra mercy? What would be a meaningful way for me to show them that mercy?
- To whom in our \_\_\_\_\_ do I need to show mercy today?
- What member of our \_\_\_\_\_ is in need of my mercy?
- What problem in our \_\_\_\_\_ needs the help of a merciful leader?
- What would be a practical expression of mercy that I could extend to meet a need in our \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- What \_\_\_\_\_ could we support that is showing mercy to the most vulnerable in our world?

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## The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Pure Leader

**Team Review:** How did you show mercy to someone in need during the past week?

**Assess:** What do you think it means to be a pure leader?

## Insights and Ideas

**I**n Matthew 5:8, Jesus shares another Beatitude: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” The word, “heart” refers to our attitudes, motives, thinking and will. To be “pure” is to be unadulterated and undivided in loyalty. The outcome of the process of purifying our hearts is that we “see God”—that is, we experience intimate fellowship with Him.

What was Jesus telling us in this Beatitude? He was saying, “God blesses those whose attitudes, motives, thinking and will are pure, full of integrity, and loyal to God.” The apostle Paul offers some great insight on these four areas:

1. *Attitude.* Paul said, “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the *attitude of your minds*; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22–24, emphasis added). Attitudes are contagious. Paul’s words challenge us to be made new in our attitudes.
2. *Motives.* First Corinthians 4:5 says, “Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.” The Lord knows our motives better than we know ourselves, and one day those motives will be exposed. Unless we invite the purifying work of His Spirit into our inner being, our motives will continually undermine us.
3. *Thinking.* Philippians 4:8 says, “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.” We have the power to control our thinking. Paul didn’t say, “Think about thinking about ...” He said, “Think about ...” It’s a deliberate choice.
4. *Will.* Philippians 2:13 says, “It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” We have a will, but we can also invite, welcome and cooperate with God’s work in our will.

When our heart is right before God, we can become the pure leader God is calling us to be.

## Reflect and Discuss

1. Who is a pure leader (besides Jesus) you admire? Why?
2. Which of the four areas above — attitude, motives, thinking or will — is your biggest challenge to keep pure? Why?
3. What practical steps can leaders take to become pure in their attitudes, motives, thinking and will?

## Apply

Do a “purity” audit on your attitude, motives, thinking, and will, and then draft a plan to see one area transformed to become more like Jesus. What steps can you take? What Scriptures can you engage? Whom can help you? What resources would help you grow?

The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Pure Leader

**Assess:** What do you think it means to be a pure leader?

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Matthew 5:8).

God blesses those whose attitudes, motives, thinking and will are pure, full of integrity, and loyal to God.

Becoming a pure leader:

1. \_\_\_\_\_.

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## The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

# The Peaceful Leader

**Team Review:** What area of your heart have you allowed the Holy Spirit to purify in the last week?

**Assess:** Who's the most peaceful person you know?

### Insights and Ideas

**M**y wife and I recently visited Muir Woods in Northern California. As we walked down a path through this breathtaking environment, there was such a sense of peace. These enormous trees created a canopy that housed gentleness, calm and peacefulness ... a shelter from the brokenness of our world.

Interestingly, Jesus called us to be peacemakers. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Somebody who works for peace is not only at peace with God, but they help others experience peace, too. Simply put, Jesus was saying, "God blesses those who help people experience peace with God and peace with others."

Being a peaceful leader is not a matter of personality. You can be a bold, hard-charging leader with a tremendous amount of inner peace. And you can be a soft-spoken, gentle leader with a great deal of inner turmoil. Peace begins on the inside.

Peace stands out from the leadership abrasiveness and disorder we often see today. Of course, Jesus' Beatitude is not just about experiencing peace but being a maker of peace. How do we make peace as leaders?

1. *Be at peace.* Creating peace begins by making sure you are at peace with God. You cannot give what you do not possess. Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
2. *Create peaceful environments.* As a leader, you have the ability to shape the environments where you live, work and serve. At home, create peace by loving your spouse and kids and cultivating an environment that's a safe place from the storms of life. At work, cultivate a peaceful environment by giving time and attention to employee engagement, building relationships and addressing conflict quickly.
3. *Seek the peace of your city.* Our world is full of turmoil. What would it look like for you to work for peace in your city? Those were the instructions Jeremiah gave to the Jews living in Babylon when he said, "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper" (Jeremiah 29:7).

Leadership is filled with fearful moments, but we don't have to be hostages of that fear. Instead, we can live and act as peacemakers.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. What aspects of leadership create the greatest amount of fear for you?
2. How can we create a more peaceful work environment?
3. How is God calling us to be peacemakers in our city?

### Apply

What can you do to make peace in the places God has called you — at home, at work, in your church, in the community or around the world? Rather than talking about the need for peace, why not take action this week to be a maker of peace?



The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God’s Favor

## The Peaceful Leader

**Assess:** Who’s the most peaceful person you know?

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

God blesses those who help people experience peace with God and peace with others.

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How to be a peacemaking leader:

1. *Be at* \_\_\_\_\_.

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

2. *Create peaceful* \_\_\_\_\_.

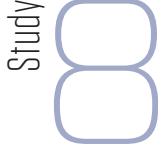
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### Apply

What can you do to make peace in the places God has called you — at home, at work, in your church, in the community or around the world? Rather than talking about the need for peace, why not take action this week to be a maker of peace?



## The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

# The Persevering Leader

**Team** What are you doing to be a peacemaker in your home, church or community?

**Assess:** What has been one of the biggest challenges you've had to persevere through as a leader?

### Insights and Ideas

**T**he leader God blesses is marked by a number of positive character qualities. Perhaps one of the most difficult is what Jesus addressed as He closed His teaching on the Beatitudes.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:10–12).

In the simplest of terms, Jesus is saying, "God blesses those who do right despite what persecution comes with it."

Leadership is filled with hardship. There will be times when you're accused falsely or dragged through the mud. There will be seasons when you feel like you're carrying the weight of the world ... walking under the constant pressure of compassion fatigue and decision fatigue. But in the midst of the pain, backbiting, brokenness, suffering and fatigue, keep doing what's right. Persevere. Don't quit. God has not forgotten you. There is a reward that awaits you. What marks a persevering leader?

1. *Persevering leaders have the right purpose.* Leaders who persevere have something worth fighting for. They know their God-given purpose, and they refuse to take their eye off the ball.
2. *Persevering leaders have the right perspective.* Persevering leaders have the ability to see pain and problems from a healthy perspective. They embrace these setbacks as opportunities to learn and grow.
3. *Persevering leaders have the right people.* Leaders who last for the long haul don't fight alone. They surround themselves with family, friends, mentors, coaches and teachers who will help them finish well.
4. *Persevering leaders have the right practices.* Leaders who persevere are committed to important practices like spiritual disciplines, personal growth planning and habits that cultivate health.
5. *Persevering leaders have the right parameters.* Persevering leaders establish boundaries and safeguards that enable them to protect their integrity.

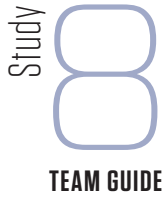
At the end of your persevering journey, may you be able to join the apostle Paul in declaring, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7–8).

### Reflect and Discuss

1. When is it hardest for you to persevere in leadership?
2. Which of the five persevering qualities is your biggest strength, and which is your greatest weakness?
3. How can a leader persevere in the midst of persecution?

### Apply

Set aside some time to evaluate your "perseverance quotient" in the five areas of purpose, perspective, people, practices and parameters. How can you strengthen each of these and maximize your ability to finish well?



The Leader God Blesses: 8 Qualities that Attract God's Favor

## The Persevering Leader

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God blesses those who do right despite what persecution comes with it.

Five marks of persevering leaders:

1. *Persevering leaders have the right* \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. *Persevering leaders have the right* \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. *Persevering leaders have the right* \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. *Persevering leaders have the right* \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. *Persevering leaders have the right* \_\_\_\_\_ .

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

### Apply

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