

## PART IV

# THE HEAD OF A GREAT LEADER

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

The journey of becoming a great leader starts in the *heart* with motivation and intent. If you don't get the heart right, your leadership will never reflect how Jesus led. Then, when we realize that God is our primary authority and audience and that we are here to please Him alone, our good intentions travel to our *heads*. That is where we store our perspectives on life and leadership: specifically, all great leaders know not only *whose* they are, but also *who* they are. They are aware that the purpose of their lives is already embedded within them, put there by God. As Ephesians 2:10 says, "We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

So we will start this section on the head of a great leader by helping you develop a compelling vision for your life that will tell you and those you influence who you are (your purpose), where you are going (your picture of the future), and what will guide your journey (your values).<sup>1</sup>

Once we have focused on you and how the vision for your life will have an impact on others, we will turn our attention to the need for developing a compelling vision for your team or organization. Of course, throughout our discussion we will be focusing on Jesus' intentions for Himself and for us.

## **DEVELOPING YOUR OWN COMPELLING VISION**

When I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach.

1 Corinthians 9:16

The goal of this chapter is to help you develop a compelling vision for your life. This vision will be important in guiding and aligning the efforts of those who are to follow you so that their relationship with you is not built on a false foundation of who you are.

Our experience tells us that few people have a clear, compelling vision for themselves, even though God has one for each of us. And how do you make a decision about what you are going to do with your time if you don't have a compelling vision that tells you your purpose, reflects your picture of the future, and reminds you of your values?

### **YOUR LIFE PURPOSE**

We all share a common purpose: "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). But each of us also has a specific purpose, a personalized reason for being. Note that a purpose is different from a goal, in that it does not have a beginning or an end; your purpose is the meaning of the journey of your life, not the destination. Your purpose is your calling, the reason you were created, the place where your passion and giftedness meet. In the context of leadership, your purpose must include serving the best interests of those you lead, or your "leadership" becomes manipulation and exploitation, the

absolute opposite of leading like Jesus.

The following is a simple process that will help you create a good first draft of your life purpose.<sup>1</sup> First, list some personal characteristics you feel good about. These are God-given traits that are unique to you.

Use nouns like these:

patience	sales ability	energy
enthusiasm	intellect	artistic ability
physical strength	charm	role model
wit	problem-solving ability	creativity
sense of humor	diplomacy	teaching ability

For example, Ken chose *sense of humor, people skills, teaching skills, and role model*.

[Your Notes]

Next, list ways you successfully interact with people. These have to do with your unique, God-given personality. Use verbs like these:

teach	encourage	love
inspire	plan	coach
produce	stimulate	help
manage	act	write
educate	lead	
motivate	sell	

Ken picked *educate, help, inspire, and motivate*.

[Your Notes]

Finally, visualize what your perfect world would be—one that would make Jesus smile. What would people do or say? Write a description of this perfect world.

To Ken, a perfect world is *where everyone is aware of the presence of God in their lives and realizes they are here to serve, not to be served*.

[Your Notes]

Now, combine two of your nouns, two of your verbs, and your definition of your perfect world, and you'll have a good start on a definition of your life purpose.

Ken's life purpose is to be *a loving teacher and role model of simple truths who helps and motivates myself and others to be aware of the presence of God in our lives and realize we are here to serve, not to be served.*

[Your Notes]

Remember, this is your first draft. Share it with important people in your life and see how they respond. Feel free to make changes; determining your life purpose is an ongoing process.

## YOUR PICTURE OF THE FUTURE

Your picture of the future is all about where you are heading in your life and, in many ways, how you'd like to be remembered. In fact, the essence of your picture of the future might be the epitaph on your tombstone. While it might sound morbid, it is actually helpful to think of your own obituary as your picture of the future.

We first got this idea when we read about Alfred Nobel's experience in the late nineteenth century. Alfred Nobel was the inventor of dynamite. When his brother Ludvig died in France, a newspaper mistakenly printed an obituary about Alfred instead of Ludvig. As a result, Alfred had the unusual experience of reading his own obituary. To his dismay, the focal point of the piece was the destruction brought about through his invention of dynamite. Devastated to think he would be remembered that way, Alfred gathered friends and loved ones around him and asked them, "What's the opposite of destruction?" The almost unanimous reply was "Peace." As a result, Alfred redesigned his life and set aside the bulk of his estate to establish the Nobel Prize so that he would be remembered for peace, not destruction.

To determine your picture of the future, we want you to write your own obituary. This is not something you can put together as quickly as you did the first draft of your life purpose. We suggest you spend some time on it and then share it with some of your loved ones—not to scare them but to get their

feedback. Ask them, “Is this the way you would like to remember me?”

To give you an example, the following is an obituary Ken wrote about himself. When he shared it with his wife, Margie, at first she thought he was getting a little dark, but then she got into it and helped him write it.

Ken Blanchard was a loving teacher and living example of simple truths whose books and speeches on leadership, management, and life helped motivate himself and others to awaken to the presence of God in their lives and to realize they are here to serve, not to be served. He continually inspired, challenged, and equipped people to live, love, and lead like Jesus. He was a loving child of God, son, brother, spouse, father, grandfather, uncle, cousin, friend, and colleague who strove to find a balance between success, significance, and surrender. He had a spiritual peace about him that permitted him to say no in a loving manner to people and to projects that got him off purpose. He knew full well that BUSY stands for Being Under Satan’s Yoke. He was a person of high energy who was able to see the positive in any event. No matter what happened, he could find a lesson or message in it. Ken Blanchard trusted God’s unconditional love and believed *he was God’s beloved*. Ken valued integrity, walked his talk, and was a 185-pound lean and mean golfing machine. He will be missed, because wherever he went, he made the world a better place.

Ken recognizes that some of the things mentioned in the obituary are goals or hoped-for outcomes, such as being able to say no in a loving manner to both people and projects that get him off purpose. Ken admits he still has never heard a bad idea. As for being a 185-pound lean and mean golfing machine, that is also an ongoing aspiration.

So have fun writing your obituary. Share your truth about yourself as well as some hoped-for results of your life.

## **YOUR CORE VALUES**

It has been said that the most important thing in life is to decide what’s most important. Your values are the beliefs you find most important: you feel strongly about them and choose them over other alternatives.

When you were a kid, your parents and other adults tended to define your values, but at some point in life we all choose what is most important to us. Your leader at work might value results more than people, and you might be the opposite. People don't all value the same things. Some people value wealth and power, and others are more concerned with safety or survival. Success is a value; integrity and relationships are values as well. The following is a sample list of some personal values. If the list doesn't include things you value, write them in the blank spaces.

truth	originality	security
wisdom	service	resources
power	respect	love
commitment	freedom	excellence
courage	order	fun
recognition	integrity	responsiveness
excitement	spirituality	relationships
learning	peace	success
creativity	cooperation	_____
honesty	loyalty	_____
happiness	humor	_____

When you turn your life over to the Lord, He will give you a different perspective on what you value. Given that fact, circle the *ten* values from this list that are most meaningful to you. If you have trouble narrowing down your top values, combine a couple. For example, Ken combined two words and included *spiritual peace* as an important value for him.

As you try to determine what your values are, we want you to start with a long list of ten. But fewer than ten is better, particularly if you want your values to guide your behavior. Some maintain that more than five values is too many and can be immobilizing.<sup>2</sup>

Now look at those ten circled values and underline the *five* values that are more meaningful to your life than the rest. Take your time. Making these choices can be difficult.

Now here's the part that may take you even longer. Study those five remaining values and *rank them* from most important (#1) to least important (#5).

Your number one value is your core value, something you want to be true about you no matter what you're doing. If, for example, your number one value is integrity, living without integrity is not an option.

Why did we want you to rank your values? Because values exist in dynamic tension with one another. For example, if you value financial growth but integrity is your core value, you will look at any activities that could lead to financial gain through the lens of integrity, because you value integrity more than profit.

Ken ordered his values like this: *spiritual peace, integrity, love, and joy.*

How do you know if you're living according to a particular value? First, you have to define that value as specifically as possible. If you don't define each value, it will have little meaning to you or to anyone else. A value like *justice*, for example, can be defined differently by different people. For one, it might mean "equal opportunity." For another, it might mean "fair process." For the third, it might mean "getting my due share."

So take some quiet time to define each of your values, and for each one decide how you would finish this statement:

"I value \_\_\_\_\_, and I know I am living by this value anytime I . . ."

One of Ken's values is joy, a concept some might think is difficult to define. Ken has written the following:

I value joy, and I know I am living by this value anytime I . . .

- let my playful child express himself;
- wake up feeling grateful for my blessings, for the beauty around me, and for the people in my life;
- smile and am happy and laugh and kid; and
- get into the act of forgetfulness about myself.

Once you have a good grasp of your purpose, your picture of the future, and your values, write them down in a place where you can read them every morning. Doing so will help to set your vision for the day. At night, review the list to see how well you did.

We understand that you might feel intimidated by people who write in their journals in four different colors and include poetry. But at the end of the day, after reviewing your compelling vision, make a simple journal entry. Write affirmations of what you did well that day. Then write *redirections* regarding

what you wish you could do over. (That could mean making an apology or two the next day.) In other words, don't create a compelling vision and then never look at it again.

## **GOALS**

You might be wondering where goal setting fits in with developing a personal compelling vision. Goals are not normally considered part of a compelling vision for one's life, but they do help you determine what you want to accomplish on a day-to-day basis.

When it comes to goal setting, you need to remember two things. First, don't establish too many goals. Three to five are the most any individual can focus on at any one time. We believe in the 80/20 rule: 80 percent of what you want to happen in your life comes from about 20 percent of what you focus your attention on. So set goals in the 20 percent that will give you the greatest impact.

Second, make your goals observable and measurable. If you can't measure something, you can't manage it. You need to know what good behavior looks like. The action your goal focuses on needs to be observable. For example, if you are interested in losing weight, you need to know your present weight and your desired weight. Then, on a weekly basis, you can track how well you are doing and either cheer yourself on or redirect your efforts and get back on track.

## **PAUSE AND REFLECT**

In this chapter we gave you a lot of work to do as well as a lot to think about. Study the answers you came up with and review what you have learned about yourself. Remember that assessing your life purpose, your picture of the future, your values, and your goals is an ongoing process.

Finally, consider these two questions: In what specific way(s) can your recently crafted compelling vision be used for the greater good? And what can you do to glorify God in the context of fulfilling your vision?



## JESUS' COMPELLING VISION

“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Luke 19:10

A key insight into Jesus' compelling vision for His life is contained in His prayer for His disciples, recorded in John 17. Jesus stayed focused on what He was sent to accomplish in His season of leadership. He told His Father, “I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (John 17:4 NLT). In total obedience and commitment, Jesus stayed on task. He did not seek to take on other projects or the agenda others hoped He would fulfill.

One of the greatest services that leaders can provide followers is constancy of purpose. When the going gets tough, when temptations to short-term success arise, and when distractions or setbacks come, people will look to their leaders to see how they respond. Will they stay on course and remain true to their mission and values, or will they give up and give in to the pressures of the moment?

### PAUSE AND REFLECT

List the three things that are most likely to pull you off course as a leader. What impact would changing course or direction have on the morale of the people you lead?

Jesus took responsibility not just for proclaiming God's truth but also for equipping His followers with a full understanding of what they needed to know

to carry out their mission: “Now [my disciples] know that everything I have is a gift from you, for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me” (John 17:7–8 NLT). When leaders fail to take the time and effort to ensure that what they have in mind is understood and accepted, they leave themselves open to frustration, an unfulfilled mission, and bewildered and discouraged followers.

It is profoundly significant that the last lesson Jesus taught His disciples on the night of His betrayal was the same one He began with—what it means to be a servant leader. In Luke 22 we read:

[Jesus] took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to [the disciples in the upper room], saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” . . .

A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.” (vv. 19–20, 24–26)

## PAUSE AND REFLECT

Think about the depth of character and the patient love Jesus displayed in that intense moment with His disciples, who within hours would abandon and deny Him. Jesus did not despair over their slowness to grasp what He had repeatedly taught them about leadership. Instead, as the ultimate Servant Leader, Jesus provided what the disciples needed most to develop in their ability to fulfill their mission, and that meant teaching them about servant leadership one more time.

Jesus also felt responsible for the ongoing protection of His followers as, for the last time before His death, He inspired and equipped them for their mission. He told His Father, “While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me.

None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled” (John 17:12).

The more difficult and perilous the journey, the more willing leaders must be to maintain constant vigilance regarding the health and safety of their followers. This attentiveness can mean making sure they are properly trained and equipped for their mission. It can mean providing a clear set of operating values and then modeling how to use them as a guide in making decisions when the leader is not there. A leader’s vigilance can mean standing up for followers in the face of opposition or unjustified criticism. It can also mean being a good guardian of their trust by telling them the truth and being willing to serve them in areas they are not yet able to tackle on their own. Finally, in Jesus’ case, as the Good Shepherd of His followers, Jesus laid down His life so that none might perish (John 10:11, 28).

Looking beyond His time of earthly leadership, Jesus sought to provide for His followers, who would continue to implement the mission He had called them to fulfill. On the last night of His ministry on earth, Jesus prayed:

“Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.” (John 17:11, 15 NLT)

A truly great and enduring vision will extend beyond an individual’s season of leadership. Ideally, a leader seeks to send out the next generation of leaders to meet the challenges of their own season with all the wisdom, knowledge, and spiritual resources the leader can provide them. That is the fruit of great leadership.

Therefore, it is of the greatest significance and encouragement that the prayer Jesus offered on behalf of His first disciples, He offered as well for those who would come after them—including those of us who follow Him today: “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message” (John 17:20).

The “tyranny of the *or*” suggests that you, as a leader, have to choose results

*or* people. Yet Jesus modeled a “both/and” approach. In His daily interactions, Jesus elevated the growth and development of people to the status of an end goal that was every bit as important as other results. Jesus did exactly what His Father called Him to do, *and* He also focused on the development of the people around Him. And, true to His compelling vision, Jesus glorified God as He did both.

In your own season of leadership, you are called to engage in the same dual purpose. Your family, organization, community, or office needs to accomplish certain things. That’s one purpose. Following Jesus and leading as He led is another: you are serving a higher purpose and being held accountable to a higher standard, and neither may be universally understood or applauded. At the same time that you attend to the tasks at hand, you will do as Jesus did and focus on serving people by helping them grow and develop.

## CREATING A COMPELLING TEAM/ORGANIZATIONAL VISION

Jesus came to [the disciples] and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18–20

While it’s important for you to have a personal compelling vision that tells you who you are (your purpose), where you are going (your picture of the future), and what will guide your journey (your values), it is also important to create such a vision for the teams and organizations you lead.

The focus of leading a team is developing a sense of community and emphasizing that none of us is as smart as all of us. Organizational leadership is more complicated, because you are leading a number of teams or divisions, and the focus is on developing a culture—a pattern of behavior that reflects your approach to your business. Every organization has a culture. If you don’t create one that facilitates what you want to accomplish, a culture will develop on its own and could become dysfunctional or work against your purposes.

When we mention that leaders are meant to serve rather than to be served, people often think it means that the leader is trying to please everyone. Yet that is not at all what Jesus means by servant leadership. Did Jesus try to please everyone? When He washed the feet of the disciples and sent them out as His ambassadors, was He commissioning them to do whatever the people wanted them to do? Of course the answer to both those questions is no.

Jesus was completely focused on pleasing His Father, who truly was His Audience of One. And pleasing the Father meant proclaiming the gospel and dying on the cross in order to bring salvation to humankind. Jesus sent His disciples to help people understand the good news and then live according to the values of God's kingdom, not just do whatever they wanted. Jesus made it very clear that what He was asking His followers to do, in His name, would not please everyone. Jesus told the disciples up front that they would be subject to all kinds of resistance and persecution for telling people the truths that they did not want to hear.

## THE TWO ROLES OF LEADERSHIP

People skeptical about our approach to great leadership contend that the words *servant* and *leader* don't go together. How can a person both lead *and* serve? People who think that way don't understand the two parts to the great leadership that Jesus exemplified:

1. The visionary role—setting the course and the destination—is the *leadership* aspect.
2. The implementation role—doing things the right way with a focus on serving—is the *servant* aspect.

Some people think leadership is about vision while management is about implementation, but when such a distinction is made, management seems to get a second-class status. We prefer not to distinguish between the two because we consider both to be important leadership roles.

Our point of view is that vision and implementation are two sides of the same coin and are therefore equally important. To maximize results for everyone concerned, you must *lead* by setting the course and direction, and then flip the coin and *serve* by empowering and supporting others in implementation.

## THE *LEADERSHIP* ASPECT OF GREAT LEADERSHIP

Effective leadership begins with a clear vision. If your followers don't know

where you are going or where you are trying to take them, they will have a hard time getting there. In the classic story *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice learned this lesson when she came to a fork in the road. She asked the Cheshire cat which way she should go. When he asked where she was going, Alice replied that she didn't know. The cat concluded matter-of-factly, "Then it doesn't matter which way you go."<sup>1</sup> Without clear direction, leadership doesn't matter.

A compelling vision provides clear direction and focuses everyone's energy on getting where they are headed. As we said in the introduction to this section, a compelling vision has three parts:

1. Your purpose. Who are you? What business are you in? What is your family all about?
2. Your picture of the future. Where are you going? What will your future look like if you are living out your purpose?
3. Your values. What will guide your journey? What do you stand for? On what principles will you make decisions?

## **DEVELOPING A COMPELLING VISION**

### *Your Purpose*

What business are you in? What are you trying to accomplish? What is your mission statement? Jesus was clear about what business He and His disciples were in. He called His disciples, not just to become fishermen, but to a greater purpose—to become fishers of men.

An effective mission statement should express a higher purpose for the greater good and give meaning to the efforts of each individual in your organization. When Walt Disney started his theme parks, he knew how to excite people. You could say Disney was, and still is, in the happiness business. Wouldn't you rather be in the happiness business than the theme park business? Being in the happiness business drives everything Disney's cast members (employees) do with and for their guests (customers).

Even if an organization states its mission, if that statement does not support a higher purpose, it will not motivate people. For instance, one congregation said they wanted to be a twenty-four-hour-a-day church. They had a nice facility, and they wanted to keep the rooms busy. But attendance went down because the

mission wasn't something the people got excited about. Your purpose needs to inspire people.

At another church, the purpose is more inspiring to the congregation. At the beginning of every service, the minister says, "We believe that a close encounter with Jesus of Nazareth can transform lives. Our mission is to make Jesus smile." Backing up that statement are clear theological values. Attendance has gone up. It's a place where a community comes together with the main purpose of making Jesus smile.

A clear purpose tells you what business you are in. At the Lead Like Jesus ministry, our purpose is "to glorify God by inspiring and equipping people to lead like Jesus." If your organization does not have a clear purpose, if your mission statement is not worded so that everyone understands it, or if people are not excited about your mission statement, your organization or family will begin to lose its way. As the Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18 KJV). In other words, without guidance from God, law and order disappear. Without vision, the people perish.

## *Your Picture of the Future*

The second element of a compelling vision is your picture of the future, of where you are going. What will the future look like for your team or organization if things run according to your plan?

Jesus outlined His picture of the future for His disciples when He charged them, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19–20).

Walt Disney's picture of the future was that guests should have the same smile on their faces when they leave the park as when they entered. After all, when you're in the happiness business, you want to keep people smiling.

The picture of the future that Doug Erickson, of Hastings Automotive in Hastings, Minnesota, had is that his business would truly honor God and that other people would grow beside him. He says, "We've held [six Lead Like Jesus] Encounters, and we continue to use the principles of Lead Like Jesus. I never saw this in my vision, but God continues to do His thing. We're watching transformation. When you open the door and let God in, wild and crazy things can happen. Jesus is making miracles happen here!"



Your picture of the future is what you would like to happen if you live according to your purpose and everything goes well. Do you have a clear picture of the future? What does a good job look like? What will the future look like if events unfold as planned? Providing specific answers to these questions is important both to your people and to your organization.

When Warden Burl Cain assumed leadership responsibility for the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, it was known as the bloodiest prison in the country. The largest maximum-security prison in the United States, it covers an area larger than the island of Manhattan and houses more than 5,100 men whose average sentence is eighty years. Warden Cain's picture of the future was that the culture in Angola would be transformed from one of violence to one of peace. As he explained, five things were needed to accomplish his vision: decent food, good medical care, meaningful work, significant pastimes, and the opportunity for moral rehabilitation.<sup>2</sup> The last element required access to faith-based resources and training.

Part of a compelling vision is a view of the future that inspires passion and, when communicated, builds commitment for the long haul. As a result of Cain's vision, some of the inmates expressed the desire to become godly fathers despite their incarceration. To meet this desire, the Malachi Dads program was created. The theme of Malachi Dads is Malachi 4:6: "He will turn the hearts of the [fathers] to their children, and the hearts of the children to their [fathers]."

It is a startling fact that more than two million children in the United States have at least one parent who is incarcerated, and these children are seven times more likely than their peers to end up in prison.<sup>3</sup> The goal of Malachi Dads is to reverse this trend within the families of inmates.

The Malachi Dads have used Lead Like Jesus as an integral part of the leadership training element of their two-year curriculum. In 2013, Phil traveled to the prison to witness the graduation of several Malachi Dads from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. One of these men is now serving as an inmate missionary in another prison. It's amazing what can be accomplished in the lives of many when even just one leader is committed to God's vision.

At the Lead Like Jesus ministry, our picture of the future is that someday everyone, everywhere will be impacted by someone who leads like Jesus. To accomplish that, we envision the following:

1. Jesus is adopted as the role model for all leaders.

2. All people are being drawn to Jesus by the positive impact of Christians leading like Jesus.

This kind of picture of the future keeps people going when times are tough and prevents the organization from stopping short or arriving at the wrong destination.

In every picture of the future, it is important to distinguish between *goals* and *vision*. A *goal* is a specific event that, once achieved, becomes a piece of the organization's history and, as such, is superseded by a new goal. In contrast, a *vision* is an ongoing, evolving, hope-filled look into the future that excites people even though they know they will never see its complete fulfillment.

In 1961 President John F. Kennedy challenged the American people with the *goal* of putting a man on the moon and returning him home safely by the end of the decade. When the moon landing was accomplished, NASA lost its purpose until it established a new goal.

In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. challenged America to pursue a *vision* in his "I Have a Dream" speech. He painted a verbal picture of a spiritually transformed nation. More than forty years after his assassination, Dr. King's vision continues to stir passion and commitment.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus continually talked about the kingdom of God—its values, teachings, parables, miracles, and final fulfillment. He gave the disciples a clear picture of the future, and they committed themselves to that future—just as Christians do today.

## *Your Values*

The third element of a compelling vision is values—those intangibles that will guide your journey and govern how you want people to behave in your organization. From our experience, very few organizations around the world have clearly defined values written down for their members.

Many companies that have spelled out their values either have too many values or do not have their values ranked. Why is it important to state and prioritize your values? Because when conflicts arise, people need to know which values are most important. Without guidelines, people do their own prioritizing, and that may lead them away from fulfilling the desired organizational purpose and picture of the future.

As we identify and prioritize our own values, it is important to know and

understand what Jesus set before us as His nonnegotiable priorities. When, for instance, the Pharisees sought to test Jesus with the question “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:36–40).

Notice that Jesus rank-ordered two values:

1. Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind.
2. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Even if they are rank-ordered, however, values will not drive the accomplishment of a purpose or picture of the future unless they are translated into behaviors. That’s what Jesus did throughout His three-year public ministry. Clarifying how values are lived out in behavioral terms allows for accountability and the measurement of progress.

Walt Disney seemed to sense the importance of having only a few values and rank-ordering them when he prioritized his organization’s four operating values, which Disney identifies as its “quality standards”: safety, courtesy, the show, and efficiency.<sup>4</sup> Most people, when they think about Disney, would probably put courtesy as the number one value, followed by efficiency, because they think that making money would be next in importance. Then safety might be third and the show, fourth.

Actually, Disney’s first priority is safety. “Ahead of courtesy?” you ask. Yes, because leaders realized that if guests were to leave the park on a stretcher, they would not have the same smiles on their faces leaving the park as they had when entering the park. When you reflect on the fact that Disney employees are in the happiness business, this ranking makes sense.

Imagine that a cast member (Disney employee) is enjoying a conversation with a guest when they hear a scream. To follow Disney’s values, the cast member will excuse himself immediately and focus on the number one value—safety. If these values were not rank-ordered, the cast member might say, “People are always yelling in the park,” and then continue talking to the guest. A manager might confront the cast member by saying, “You were closest to the scream. Why didn’t you react?” The cast member could respond, “I was being

courteous.” Cast members know that safety takes precedence over courtesy.

Why is it important to know that efficiency—having a well-run and profitable organization—is ranked fourth? First of all, it indicates that efficiency is indeed a value. But, second, because it is ranked fourth, Disney employees who are following their company’s values will do nothing to save money if it compromises safety, courtesy, or the show. These three values are all ranked higher than efficiency.

At the Lead Like Jesus ministry, we have established these as our rank-ordered values:

1. Glorify God in all we do.
2. Honor Jesus as the greatest leadership role model of all time.
3. Build relationships based on trust and respect.
4. Create biblically sound content and teaching.
5. Practice wise stewardship of time, talent, treasure, and influence.

Then each of these values is operationally defined. For example, we will know that we are *glorifying God in all we do* when we do the following:

- Give God all the credit.
- Relinquish all problems to His care.
- Seek His face by worshiping together, studying together, and praying together.
- Love one another as He loves us: we are loving truth tellers, honoring one another’s commitment to the Lord and encouraging one another’s spiritual health and well-being.
- Express love to one another through our patience, kindness, generosity, courtesy, humility, good temper, guilelessness, and sincerity.
- Proceed boldly in living the Lead Like Jesus message in our personal and professional lives.

True success in leadership depends on how clearly the organization’s values are defined, ordered, and lived out by the leader.

Everyone is watching. If leaders live their values, then others are ready to follow suit. Jesus lived His values of love of God and love of His neighbor all the way to the cross: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life

for one's friends" (John 15:13).

## **PAUSE AND REFLECT**

Imagine you were being interviewed by your ten-year-old daughter, and she asked you the following questions:

- "Why are we called a family?"
- "If we were considered a really good family, how could we tell?"
- "What are the four most important values in our family?"

What would your answers be?

## **MAKING TOUGH VALUE CHOICES**

Many of us work in organizations that have established—either intentionally or by default—a set of operating values. Conflicts between these organizational values and someone's personal values are a reality. What do you do when the values of the organization do not align with your own? You may realize this only over time as you notice gaps between the established purpose and values and what is acted out on a day-to-day basis. You are faced with a choice: you can stay and compromise your values, you can stay and seek to be an active influence for change in the organization, or you can leave.

Leading like Jesus means not letting the organization change your values or force you to compromise them. If the temptation to compromise your values does arise, it is likely to stem from EGO issues—particularly toxic fears, such as fear of rejection, fear of poverty, fear of ridicule, fear of confrontation, or fear of lost position. Jesus dealt with this dynamic of choice when He spoke of the impossibility of serving two masters at the same time: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Luke 16:13).

Jesus posed the ultimate challenge for His followers when He spelled out the long-range price of compromise: “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?” (Luke 9:25). Jesus also told us that we can trust in His promise never to leave us alone or outside the range of His care and concern for us.

Leading like Jesus means you may have to make a choice to be an agent of change or to seek an environment more aligned with your values. The appropriate response for your circumstances will depend on what God has in mind for you.

Life and leadership are all about choices. Choices are made based on your values. You are in fact a monument to the choices you have made over the course of your life. If you want to change your life, embrace the values of Jesus, the Servant Leader.

## ESTABLISHING GOALS

Once your vision is set, you can then establish goals to answer the question *What do you want people to focus on now?* A compelling vision gives goals real significance.

As we said earlier, don’t have more than three to five main goals. This way you will be able to focus on the goals you think will make the biggest difference in fulfilling your vision.

An important part of goal setting is making sure everyone knows what good behavior looks like. Anyone who has attempted to get a teenager to pick up his or her room knows the general instruction “Clean up your room” is not effective. When you go back two hours later, the teen is standing proudly in the middle of a four-foot-square clean zone surrounded by undisturbed chaos, claiming proudly to have done what you asked.

Sometimes in the haste of the moment, leaders conclude for the sake of personal convenience that they have been perfectly clear about what they want in their initial instructions, and then hold their listeners accountable for perfect comprehension, perfect retention, and perfect execution. Serving people well as a leader means testing for understanding—and repetition, repetition, repetition. Great leaders almost become like third-grade teachers.<sup>5</sup> They communicate their vision, values, and goals over and over and over again until people get them right, right, right!

## **PAUSE AND REFLECT**

What's your purpose? What is your preferred picture of the future? What are your values? What are your goals? If you can't answer those questions, you don't have a clear vision. Without a clear vision, the rest of your leadership skill and effort won't matter.

As a leader, if you cut people loose without specific directions and well-understood guidelines, they will lose their way and the organization will suffer. Guidelines are boundaries that—like riverbanks—channel energy in a certain direction.<sup>6</sup> If you take away the banks, there won't be a river anymore; there will be a large puddle, devoid of momentum and direction. What keeps the river flowing are its banks.

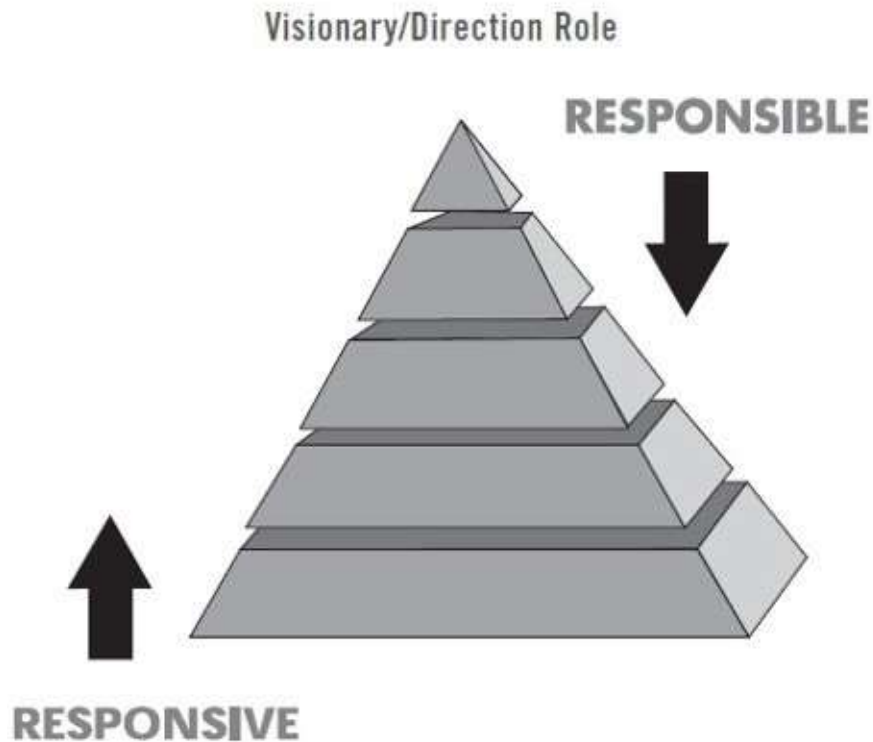
## IMPLEMENTING YOUR COMPELLING VISION

Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”

Mark 1:38

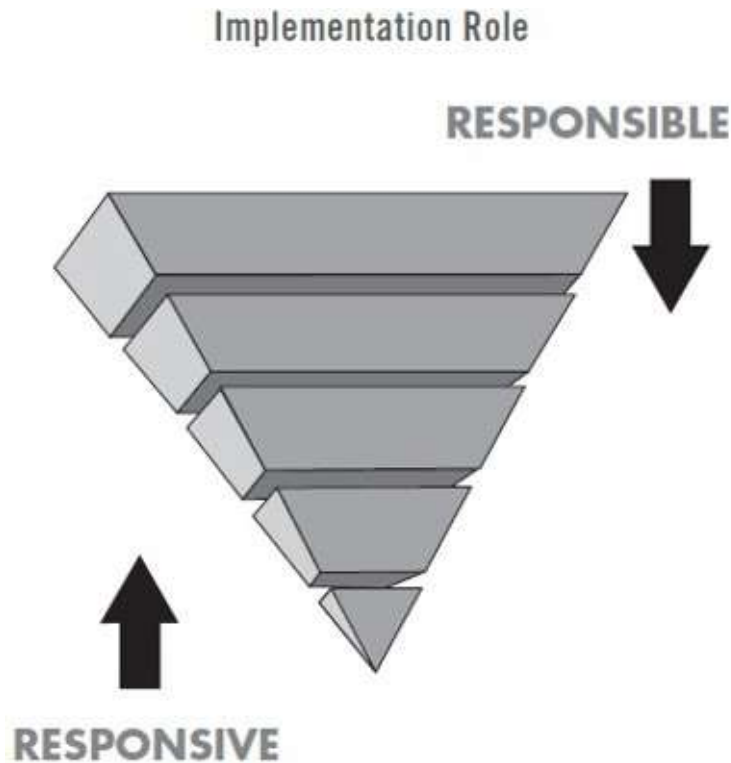
The traditional pyramid hierarchy is effective for the visionary aspect of leadership. People look to the leader for both vision and direction. As the following diagram suggests, although the leader may involve experienced people in shaping direction, the ultimate *responsibility* for establishing a compelling vision remains with the leader and cannot be delegated. Once the vision is set, the rest of the organization is expected to be *responsive* to the vision, to live according to its guidelines.





As soon as people clearly understand where you want to take them and why, the emphasis switches to the second role of leadership: implementation. As the leader, you now become, in a sense, a servant of the vision: you serve the people you lead, the people whom you have asked to act according to the vision and to accomplish the stated goals.

When the leader becomes the servant, as the following diagram suggests, the traditional pyramid hierarchy must be turned upside down so the frontline people who are closest to the customers are at the top, where they can be *responsible*—able to respond—to their customers. In this scenario, leaders serve: leaders are responsive to their people's needs, training and developing them to accomplish established goals and live according to their vision of the customer experience.



When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, He was transitioning His focus from the visionary or *leadership* role to the implementation or *servant* role. He turned the organizational pyramid upside down. In the process, He demonstrated the true essence of great leadership and challenged His disciples to do the same.

When we talk with leaders and managers about being a serving leader, they often are concerned about losing their positional power. Notice what Jesus said to His disciples after He had washed their feet. Jesus reclined at the table and said this to them:

“Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for this is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13:12–15)

Did Jesus imply here that He had lost His positional power? Absolutely not. As a Jesus-like leader or manager, you still maintain your power, but your effectiveness soars because you are responding to the needs of your people.

Unfortunately, some managers—in churches as well as businesses—fail to respond because they are more interested in protecting their positions than in serving others.

## **PAUSE AND REFLECT**

What an experience that must have been for the disciples as their Lord and Teacher humbled Himself and performed such a personal and intimate act of service! Imagine being one of the disciples: having Jesus wash your feet would have been powerful and humbling.

Now think of your own life. When did someone you know perform an act of humble leadership? What was the act? What were your thoughts and feelings as you witnessed this?

As the ultimate Servant Leader, Jesus gave His disciples clear direction before He sent them out to serve. The vision Jesus cast was clear, and He had heard it from the top of the hierarchy—His Father. As fishers of men, the disciples were to “go and make disciples of all nations,” focusing first on loving God and then on loving their neighbors (Matthew 4:19 ESV; 28:19; 22:37–40). And when it came to implementing this vision, Jesus wanted the disciples to be servant leaders who helped others understand and believe the good news that Jesus came to earth, lived, died, was resurrected, lives in us, and is coming again.

The implementation stage of effective leadership is where most leaders and organizations get in trouble. They keep the traditional hierarchical pyramid alive and well, but then all the energy moves away from the customers, up the hierarchy, because people feel they must please their bosses. The neglected customers are at the bottom of the pyramid. In an organization like this, as we have said earlier, self-serving leaders assume that the sheep are there for the benefit of the shepherds. Jesus spoke against this authoritarian hierarchy when He said, “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:26).

If you don’t turn the pyramid upside down when you start implementing the

vision, you end up with a duck pond. When there is conflict between what the customer wants and what the boss wants, the boss wins. You have people responding to customers like ducks: “It’s our policy.” (*Quack, quack.*) “Don’t blame me; I just work here.” (*Quack, quack.*) “Would you like to speak to my supervisor?” (*Quack, quack.*) But when the frontline customer contact people are treated as responsible owners of the vision, they soar like eagles rather than quack like ducks.

Jesus was often confronted with quacking Pharisees and synagogue leaders, who were more interested in protecting rules and regulations than in hearing Jesus’ message of love, grace, and forgiveness. Consider this interaction:

On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When

Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.” Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”

The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?” When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing. (Luke 13:10–17)

If you desire to lead like Jesus, being a great servant leader is crucial during implementation, when your job is to be *responsive* to your people and to help them live according to the team or organization’s vision, accomplish its goals, and take care of its customers.

## **APPLICATION BEYOND FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS**

While we have focused on the two roles of great leadership in a formal organizational context, we want to be clear that these same two aspects of leadership play out in your life role leadership position in your family, church, or volunteer organization. For example, in a family, the parents are responsible for setting the vision and establishing the goals for the family. As the kids get older, they can become involved in this process, but initially and ultimately it is the parents' responsibility to provide the visionary aspect of great leadership.

Unfortunately, many parents do not focus much attention on defining a compelling vision for their family that every member can understand. As a result, kids learn more about what *not* to do than about how to do the right thing in the right way. A great source of frustration in families is what we call *bring-me-a-rock syndrome*. It occurs when parents issue a nonspecific instruction like "Bring me a rock" but fail to test for understanding, and then become annoyed when the results don't meet their expectations. Implementation can only be effective if the important visionary work and goal setting are done first and communicated clearly. Only then can parents move to the bottom of the hierarchy and serve the family as, together, they pursue the vision.

For those who follow Jesus of Nazareth, the command for each and every person has been established by the Father and clearly communicated to all His children: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" and "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30–31).

In the realm of family relationships, leading like Jesus means your vision is committed service in the best interest of every family member. Committed service does not selfishly exploit a person's weaknesses and shortcomings but seeks to encourage the best in each member of the family.

## **THE VISION OF GREAT LEADERSHIP**

When Ken was a college professor, he would be in trouble with the faculty when he gave out the final exam questions on the first day of class—and he did so every semester. When the faculty found out, they asked Ken, "What are you doing?"

He calmly responded, "I thought we were supposed to teach these students."

"We are—but we don't give them the final exam ahead of time!"

Ken continued: "Not only will I give them the final exam ahead of time, but

throughout the semester I'll teach them the answers to the exam questions so that when they get to the final, they'll get As."

Ken still feels strongly that life is about helping people get As, not forcing them into a normal distribution curve. Did Jesus believe in a normal distribution curve? Absolutely not! In the Great Commission, when He sent His disciples out into the world, He said to them, "Make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). He wanted everyone to become part of God's family.

Bob Buford, founder of Leadership Network and author of the book *Halftime*, believes that all of us who name Jesus as Lord are going to face a "final exam" when we stand before God at the end of our lives. According to Buford, the two questions on God's final exam will be *What did you do with Jesus?* and *What did you do with the resources you were given in life?*<sup>1</sup>

When you know the questions ahead of time, there is no excuse not to get an A. Most teachers have their students guess what will be on the final exam. Not so with Jesus. He was clear about the final exam and ready to help His followers get the right answers. He wants everyone to get an A.

Jesus said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). What did He come to serve? Jesus came to serve the people and prepare them to go out and share the news of forgiveness and salvation.

Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, once preceded Ken at a conference and pointed out in his speech, "All the kings and queens in history sent their people out to die for them. I only know one King who decided to die for His people." And dying on our behalf is the ultimate in servant leadership. Jesus isn't asking us to literally die for people, but He is saying, "Not so with you," regarding the world's traditional leadership (Matthew 20:26). Jesus mandates that we establish clear visions for our organizations, visions that will in one way or another shine His light into this dark world.

The vision has to be something bigger than you, bigger than the company, the organization, or the church. Once that vision is defined, the Lord mandates servant leadership that helps people live according to that vision.

When we put the *heart* and the *head* together in a Lead Like Jesus perspective, other people become more important to us, and we take a backseat. Jesus knew His people intimately, and He equipped them to be competent and confident servant leaders. Jesus was also the preeminent spokesperson for God's vision—the purpose, the picture of the future, and the values that God created us to live out and fulfill. Turning a vision into reality requires leaders who have

servant hearts and a strategy for both developing and empowering others to live according to the Lord's established vision, values, and goals.

Jesus was clear about why He came (to die on the cross as payment for our sins), what the good news was (Jesus defeated sin and death: we can be forgiven and enjoy eternal life with Him), and what He wanted people to do (name Jesus as Savior and Lord—and then share the news of His victory, His love, and His promises). Jesus also modeled great leadership—servant leadership—that others may benefit from, learn from, and emulate.

## PAUSE AND REFLECT

Think for a moment about how well you serve those around you. Do you help your people pass the final exam? Do you help them live according to the Lord's, the church's, the organization's, or the company's vision? Leadership is not about power. It's not about control. It's about helping people live according to the vision.

Now we are ready to address the next domain of great leadership. We will examine the *hands*—the public leadership behavior—of a great leader in the next section.