

**The Making Of A Leader**  
**Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development**  
**By**  
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Introduction

Mary Thames – Organizational Leader

Leaders who make decisions for others need to understand the various factors that allow convergence: role-match, giftedness, experience, spiritual maturity, destiny, geographic location, etc. They should consider the needs of the individual as well as the needs of the organization.

Pastor Jeffrey McDonald – Mature Model

Very few experienced leaders know how or have taken the time to articulate a ministry philosophy.

Who Needs This Book?

Leadership development theory does what a good map is supposed to do. It is a set of well integrated ideas to help us:

- organize what we see happening in leaders’ lives,
- anticipate what might happen in future development,
- understand past events so as to see new things in them,
- better order our lives.

*God develops a leader over a lifetime.*

Leadership is a lifetime of God’s lessons. Yours will be unique.

Chapter 1  
A Letter to Dan, the Intern

It’s great when we realize we are in God’s training program. He always adapts the curriculum to fit us.

Leadership development theory begins with the concept of formulating a time-line. Though it is not true specifically for anyone, it does give a functional framework.

Phase I.	Phase II.	Phase III.	Phase IV.	Phase V.
Sovereign	Inner-Life	Ministry	Life	
Foundations	Growth	Maturing	Maturing	Convergence

Sometimes, though rarely, there is a sixth phase called “Afterglow” or Celebration.” In real life, the development of Phases III, IV, and V often overlap, though I show them here in a sequential pattern.

Though there may be fruitfulness in ministry, the major work is that which God is doing to and in the leaders, not through him or her. Most emerging leaders don’t recognize this. God is quietly, often in unusual ways, trying to get the leader to see that one ministers out of what one is. God is concerned with what we are.

Ministry tasks are not always clear-cut and easy to see. But they are stepping stones to other ministry.

Perhaps the key issue in all of this is submission. Submission is tested only when the thing is not desired.

## Chapter 2 The Basis for Lessons: The Big Picture

The church worldwide is in need of a committed group of disciples, like those past leaders, who can lead the way by demonstrating through their lives a faith worth imitating.

Patterns deal with the overall framework, or the big picture, of a life. Processes deal with the ways and means used by God to move a leader along in the overall pattern. Principles deal with the identification of foundational truths within processes and patterns that have a wider application to leaders.

About the only thing I remember from one of my courses at seminary is a bit of doggerel that the weary professor dropped into a boring lecture:

Methods are many,  
Principles are few.  
Methods always change,  
Principles never do.

### The Generalized Time-Line

This period is defined as Phase II, the Inner-Life Growth phase. The leader learns the importance of praying and hearing God.

In Phase III, Ministry Maturing, the emerging leader reaches out to others. Many of his lessons will zero in on relationships with other people or on the inadequacies in this personal life.

Ministry activity or fruitfulness is not the focus of Phases I, II, and III. God is working primarily *in* the leader, not *through* him or her. He wants to teach us that we minister out of what we are.

By Phase IV he gains a sense of priorities concerning the best use of his gifts and understands that learning what not to do is as important as learning what to do. The principle that “ministry flows out of being” has new significance as the leader’s character mellows and matures.

In this phase the leader’s experiential understanding of God is being developed. Communion with God becomes foundational; it is more important than success in ministry.

## Identifying Development Phases

Not all boundary events are positive, as we see in the next item:

The hitch-hiker convert startled him into realigning his ministry – less emphasis on getting the decision and more on growing up into Christ. (Skinner 1974:70)

Because the very nature of leadership is influence, God endows leaders with the capacity to influence.

### Sub-Phases

As a leader, you should recognize that God is continually developing you over a lifetime.

## Chapter 3

### Foundational Lessons: Inner-Life Growth Processes

Our greatest challenge as leaders is to develop a godly character.

“Let me be taught,” wrote Henry Martyn, “that the first great business on earth is the sanctification of my own soul...”

“Character,” said Moody, “is what a man is in the dark...”

Perhaps the key word is integrity.... No amount of reputation can substitute for character. (Wiersby 1980:81-82)

### Developing a Leader – Early Processes

Three of the items are called checks because of the testing nature of this phase. These are integrity checks, obedience checks, and word checks.

#### The Integrity Check

At the heart of any assessment of biblical qualifications for leadership lies the concept of integrity – that uncompromising adherence to a code of moral, artistic, or other values that reveals itself in sincerity, honesty, and candor and avoids deception or artificiality.

#### The Word Check

A leader must have the ability to receive truth from God. Leaders always have at least one word gift along with others that make up their gift-mix. The primary word gifts are teaching, prophecy, and exhortation.

## Chapter 4

### Second Lessons: Ministry Maturing Processes – Part I

#### How Does a Person Begin Ministry?

A small beginning, but sensitivity to need, willingness to serve, and faithfulness highlight Michele’s entrance into ministry.

## Maturing in Ministry

As a potential leader moves into ministry, God develops his leadership abilities by taking him through four stages. (1) God challenges the leader into ministry. This is called *entry*. (2) He develops skills and spiritual gifts to enhance the leader's effectiveness. This is called *training*. (3) He enables the leader to relate to people in ways that will motivate and influence them. He also teaches him how to set up the means to accomplish these goals. This is called *relational learning*. (4) He helps the leader see spiritual principles that govern ministry that pleases Him. This is called *discernment*.

In the early ministry sub-phase, entry occurs as God selects those who are faithful and challenges them with ministry tasks and assignments. He develops some ministry skills in the process.

A developing leader will usually struggle with someone who is in authority over him. Learning submission is critical to learning what authority is, so emerging leaders must first learn to submit

Conflict in ministry requires discernment skills.

## The Ministry Challenge

A major responsibility of leadership is the selection and development of potential leaders. Mature leaders should openly and deliberately challenge potential leaders about specific needs and ministry opportunities.

## Discovering Spiritual Gifts

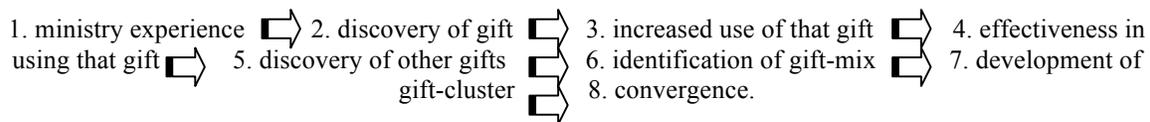


Figure 4-4 Giftedness Development Pattern  
(Read “” as “usually leads to.”)

Barnabas developed this gift of encouragement and it characterized his life.

My effectiveness as a teacher grew through experience and through my own growth and understanding of Christianity, as I developed my teaching gift.

Step 5 crept up on me by surprise.

I've recognized that the dominant gift is exhortation and the teaching gift provides the setting in which to use it.

## Summary

When God directs a potential leader into ministry, He moves him or her through four stages of development. (1) He challenges a potential leader into ministry – entry. (2) He develops skills and spiritual gifts to enhance the leader's effectiveness – training. (3) He enables the leader to relate to people in ways that will motivate and influence them, and He teaches him how to set

up the means to accomplish these goals – relational learning. (4) He helps the leader see spiritual principles that govern ministry that is pleasing to Him – discernment.

## Chapter 5 Second Lessons: Ministry Maturing Process – Part II

### Relational Learning

A leader is one who influences a specific group of people to move in a God-given direction. In order to influence and motivate people, a leader must learn how to relate to people effectively.

### The Authority Problem

Spiritual authority is delegated by God, and differs from authority that is based on position or force.

From Nee's book the "ten commandments of spiritual authority":

- 1. One who learns spiritual authority as the power base for ministry must recognize the essential Source of all authority: God.
- 2. God's delegated authority does not belong to the person exercising it – that person is just a channel.
- 3. The channel of delegated authority is responsible to God for how that authority is exercised.
- 4. A leader is one who recognizes God's authority manifested in real-life situations.
- 5. Subjection to authority means that a person is subjected to God Himself and not to the channel through which the authority comes.
- 6. Rebellion against authority means that a person is not subjecting himself to God, though it may appear that the person is rejecting some impure manifestation of God's authority through a human channel.
- 7. People who are under God's authority look for and recognize spiritual authority and willingly place themselves under it.
- 8. Spiritual authority is never exercised for one's own benefit, but for those under it.
- 9. A person in spiritual authority does not have to insist on obedience – that is the moral responsibility of the follower.
- 10. God is responsible to defend spiritual authority.

### Relational Insights

It takes grace and maturity for a man like Barnabas not only to allow such a leadership switch but to work to make it successful. Barnabas's relational insight was that Paul didn't need a mentoring, subordinate, or co-equal relationship; he needed to lead. It took a big man to be willing to step down and become the follower. Barnabas recognized spiritual authority, recognized a leader with capacity beyond his own, and took the necessary steps to encourage that leader in his calling.

### Ministry Conflict

Ministry conflict, like general conflict, tests a leader's personal maturity. What we truly are is revealed in a crisis.

## Leadership Backlash

A leader experiencing leadership backlash learns through conflict with others to submit to God in a deeper way.

A normal pattern for *leadership backlash*:

- 1. The leader gets a vision (direction) from God.
- 2. The followers are convinced of the direction.
- 3. The group moves in the direction given.
- 4. The group experiences persecution, hard times, or attacks from Satan – spiritual warfare is common.
- 5. There is backlash from the group.
- 6. The leader is driven to God to seek affirmation in spite of the action's ramifications.
- 7. God reveals Himself further: who He is, what He intends to do.
- 8. God vindicates Himself and the leader.

### Figure 5-2 Eight Stage Leadership Backlash Cycle

Leadership backlash tests a leader's perseverance, clarity of vision, and faith.

God uses complications in general to develop inner-life maturity. Leadership backlash is a form of integrity testing in which the leader's actual motivation can be revealed.

## Discernment

### Spiritual Warfare Process Item

The angel's explanation reveals the reality of the unseen spiritual warfare behind the physical scene.

All leaders, however, need the ability to discern spiritual reality in general and spiritual warfare in particular. Some leaders have a tendency to go overboard, blaming all conflict and problems on spiritual warfare. They see spiritual forces behind all human realities. Other leaders are blind to spiritual reality and see no spiritual forces behind human actions. Scripture strikes a balance between these two extremes.

*Physical situations may well be cause, controlled, or instigated by spiritual beings.*

## Power Process Items

Power items are characterized by gifted power, prayer power, power encounters, and networking power. The ultimate purpose of the power cluster is to train a leader to habitually appropriate God's power through faith.

### Prayer Challenge Process Item

Down through the ages God reveals His plans to a leader, challenges him to pray concerning that revelation, and thus involves him in the outcome.

At the heart of leadership is communication between God and the leader. A leader must know God's purposes for a group before he can communicate them.

It is a reminder that prayer is a necessary leadership habit that enhances communication with God and secures vision for ministry.

*If God calls you to a ministry, then He calls you to pray for that ministry.*

#### Faith Challenge

Leaders are people with God-given vision, and one of their essential functions is to inspire followers with that vision and hope. They can't fulfill this function without faith.

#### Influence Challenge

The *influence challenge* process item refers to those instances in which a leader is prompted by God to expand his sphere of influence.

#### Ministry Affirmation

Clearly, strong leaders as well as weak leaders need ministry affirmation.

Ministry affirmation includes such things as vision, sign, successful ministry incident, human expressions of appreciation, inner satisfaction, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, prophecy, promotion, and expansion of sphere of influence. Vision, signs, and promotions are easy to see, but real growth in discernment comes when a leader can sense God's approval through the less spectacular affirmations like human expressions of appreciation and inner satisfaction.

John's gospel records another ministry affirmation in the life of Christ:  
"Father, I thank you that you have heard me."

#### Ministry Philosophy

Ministry philosophy refers to ideas, values, and principles that a leader uses as guidelines for decision making, for exercising influence, or for evaluating his ministry.

#### Reaching the End of the Ministry Maturing Phase

The shift is from competency in *doing* to effectiveness flowing from *being*, and comes as a result of the leader's reflection on God's involvement in his life and ministry.

#### Summary

These process items – authority insights, relational insights, ministry conflict, and leadership backlash – are used to bridge the first ministry problem, the authority problem.

## Chapter 6 Ongoing Lessons: Guidance and Other Multi-Phase Processes

### Guidance Processing

A leader is a person with God-given capacity and God-given responsibility who influences a group of followers towards God's purposes for the group.

### Divine Contacts

Leaders, because of their ability to influence, need to recognize that they will often be divine contacts for others they meet. They should be especially sensitive to the Holy Spirit's use of them as divine contacts and recognize this special way of influencing.

### Mentors

They usually have a gift-mix that includes one or more of the encouragement spiritual gifts: mercy, giving, exhortation, faith, word of wisdom.

A mentor is someone who helps a protégé in some very practical ways: by giving timely *advice* that encourages the protégé; by *risking* his or her own reputation in backing the protégé; by *bridging* between the protégé and needed resources; by *modeling* and setting expectations that challenge the protégé; by *giving* tracts, letters, books, or other literary information that open perspectives for the protégé; by giving *financially*, sometimes sacrificially, to further the protégé's ministry; by *co-ministering* in order to increase the credibility, status, and prestige of the protégé; and by having the *freedom* to allow and even promote the protégé beyond the mentor's own level of leadership.

## Chapter 7 The Deepening Lessons: Life Maturing Processes

### Ministry Flows Out of Being

Throughout a leader's life, God works to deepen character as well as to develop ministry skills. Earlier, discussing transition into ministry, I pointed out how God works on foundational character development (primarily integrity) through integrity checks, obedience checks, and word checks.

God continues to form character throughout the ministry of a leader.

The major lessons of this chapter are:

- Mature ministry flows from a mature character.
- A mature character comes through difficult processing.
- Many leaders go through such processing without realizing the benefit of it.
- Spiritual authority is not a goal but rather a byproduct.

### Isolation

He never defended his action nor sought to straighten out erroneous rumors.

One way that God forces a leader into reflective evaluation and into a “being” stage of the upward development pattern involves isolation. It is one of the most effective means for maturing a leader. Several times in a leader’s lifetime, the leader may be set aside from his or her normal ministry. Causes may include crises, disciplinary action, providential circumstances (such as war, oppressive government action, illness), or self choice. The thrust of the processing is on the recognition that the isolation is God’s work and that it is a call to a deeper relationship and experience of God.

#### Conflict

Leaders are constantly dealing with conflict.

#### Life Crises

The leader sees that his only hope is in God.

Crisis processing either drives them deeper into the presence of God or drives them away from God.

2 Corinthians 1:8-11, ...He has delivered us from such deadly peril, and he will deliver us.

Notice that Paul does not dwell on the process but on the deep lessons he learned from God in it.

#### Summary

It requires time, experience, and repeated instances of maturity processing.

Not all recognize its immense value for their long-term ministry.

I saw in this incident a lesson from God to teach me about submission to authority.

I wrote on the back, “Die to the right to be right.”

I never defended my action or even talked about the situation – except to my wife and to the person to whom I was accountable during the isolation period.

I learned some organizational lessons. People in power usually win whether right on a given issue or not.

#### Chapter 8

##### Integrating the Lessons of Life: Toward a Ministry Philosophy

He was not likely to recognize innovative emergent leaders and free them for ministry.

The new pastor did not have a clear philosophy of ministry. He had no framework in which to judge the requests that were coming to him from potential leaders.

## A Ministry Philosophy

In early one-on-one Bible studies I learned that I needed to apply what I was learning or I would forget it.

*Ministry philosophy* is the result of leadership development – the ideas, values, and principles whether implicit or explicit that a leader uses as guideline for decision making, for exercising influence, or for evaluating ministry.

*Effective leaders, at all levels of leadership, maintain a learning posture throughout life.*

*Effective leaders who are productive over a lifetime have a dynamic ministry philosophy that evolves continually from the interplay of three major factors: biblical dynamics, personal gifts, and situational dynamics.*

*Leaders must develop a ministry philosophy that simultaneously honors biblical leadership values, embraces the challenges of the times in which they live, and fits their unique gifts and person development if they expect to be productive over a whole lifetime.*

### Looking for Obvious Categories that Are Absent

These functions can be helpful categories for identifying principles.

- 1. Motivation toward vision
- 2. Leadership selection and training
- 3. Decision making
- 4. Crisis resolution
- 5. Routine problem solving
- 6. Coordinating with superiors
- 7. Coordinating with peers
- 8. Coordinating with subordinates

Figure 8-2 Eight Generic Leadership Functions

## Chapter 9

### Accepting the Lessons of Life: The Leadership Challenge

#### Ministry Philosophy

A *leader*, as defined from a study of biblical leadership, and for whom we are interested in tracing leadership development, is a person

- 1. with God-given capacity *and*
- 2. with God-given responsibility to *influence*
- 3. a specific group of God's people
- 4. toward God's purposes for the group.

“Ask the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth knowledgeable, discerning, and direction-oriented leader-laborers into His harvest.”

*Leaders must develop a ministry philosophy that simultaneously honors biblical leadership values, embraces the challenges of the times in which they live, and fits their unique gifts and personal development if they expect to be productive over a whole lifetime.*

### The Final Challenge

Leadership evolves and emerges over a lifetime. In fact, leadership is a lifetime of God's lessons.