



## **Competency #4: Servant Leadership**

### **Introduction**

As a leader, you will be helping others grow in their own walks as well as their sphere of influence. Often when we think about leadership development, we think of developing a leader's skill. But when we only focus on developing a leader's competency, and we neglect the development of their character, we may be setting them up for short-term success, rather than long-term sustainability and spiritual impact. You see, it's leadership character and an abiding faith in Christ, that enables a leader to endure the rigors of leadership and leave a great leadership legacy. We will focus on deepening your courage and developing your competency of servant leadership.

### **Deepen Your Character: Courage**

Leaders take bold steps of faith in the face of obstacles and opposition.

### **Develop Your Competency: Servant Leadership**

Develop the heart and practices of a servant leader so you can leave a legacy for others to emulate.

### **Reflection Questions:**

Reflect on some of the people you have been led by.

- What did you admire most about their character?
- What leadership skills were they consistently demonstrating that made them such a good leader?
- What would you like to emulate from the way they led?

### **Objectives**

1. Using Paul's example of courageous leadership, identify a specific way you can grow in your leadership courage.
2. Describe insights you've gained from observing other servant leaders in action.



3. Identify reasons leaders may not respond enthusiastically to your leadership.
4. Articulate how you would teach a young leader to shape the character of the people on his or her team.
5. Grow in servant leadership conversations with your director by initiating regular soul care conversations.

### **Deepen Your Character: Courage**

Courage is the engine that fuels the heart and soul of spiritual leaders. It allows leaders to live with integrity, to stand up for what is important, and to speak out when necessary. But there are times when all leaders face situations where fear raises its head and they are tempted to compromise, people please, or doubt God's faithfulness. Part of God's plan for your character is to deepen your faith in Him, which means there will be times you have to demonstrate great faith and act courageously even in the face of fear.

Paul models such courageous leadership in Acts 20. This passage recounts Paul's farewell to the leaders at the church of Ephesus before heading to Jerusalem in time for the day of Pentecost. He loved these men and knew they would face opposition and criticism in the days ahead. And so, in his farewell speech to these leaders he reminds them of the example he set for them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you." Throughout this speech, many of the qualities of a courageous servant leader are demonstrated.

### **Scripture**

As you read the following Scripture, meditate on what the author wishes to communicate, and answer the questions below. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you and challenge you as a leader about how you can develop your character in this area of courage.



### **Acts 20:17-27**

*From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the ploys of my Jewish opponents. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.*

*“And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me- the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.*

*“Now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom, will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.”*

1. Think of a time you saw courageous leadership in action. How did that courageous act impact you personally?
2. This passage is laced with evidence that Paul was a courageous leader. List the words or phrases in this passage where you see examples of his leadership courage.
3. Consider how you demonstrate courage as a leader. Make a list of at least three traits of a courageous leader that you see demonstrated in this passage. Rate them on how well you think you are doing in each of the areas.
4. Write down one insight this exercise reveals about your character.
5. Write down one action step you need to take to grow in courage.



## Develop Your Competency: Servant Leadership

### Pre-Assessment

Before proceeding, complete the assessment below. The following proficiencies demonstrate mastery of this competency. Grade yourself on each.

Proficiency	Pre-Assessment
I am constantly making efforts to grow spiritually.	
I regularly connect relationally with those I am leading.	
I consistently challenge those I am leading.	
I practice active listening.	
I prioritize praying for the group.	

### Reflection Questions:

- Who do you think is the most admired spiritual leader in America today?
- Why?

When you step into leadership, you have a strong desire that God will use you to advance His mission and impact the lives of the people around you. But we've all witnessed leaders who have imploded because of bad personal decisions. Or leaders who neglect their walk with God and, over time, are leading in their own strength, dependent upon their own wisdom, and making decisions based on personal agenda. This is why it is critical as a leader of your group, and in your other spheres of influence, to develop a heart and practices of a servant leader so you can leave a legacy for others to emulate. As you model Christlike leadership, those around you will believe that they too can have Christlike leadership.



*“ I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.*

*“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 15:1-5*

As we learn to abide in Christ, we will hear his voice, know the prompting of the Spirit, and as a result be able to accomplish the work He desires for us in every area of our lives. When we are growing in our faith, God is using us as vessels for Him in our Bridge Groups, in our homes, in our work places, and in our relationships. When our heart is in tune with His spirit, we model the life of Jesus and are able to become an influence to everyone we need.

**Great leaders adopt a posture of:**

- **Humility**
- **Teachability**
- **Curiosity**
- **Intentionality**

Your Bridge Group members don't expect you to have all of the answers. They expect you to care about who they are and to want to help them grow.

- Reflect on some of the people you have been led by. What did you most admire about their character?
- What leadership skills did they consistently demonstrate that made them such a good leader?
- What would you like to most emulate from the way they led?



## How to Develop the Traits of a Servant Leader

### 1. Constantly and consistently grow in your walk with Jesus

- Evaluate your personal desire for God and His presence. Where are you dry and in need of renewal or even pruning?
- Build in some disciplines that support your need to grow, such as expanding your devotional time, spending time with an accountability partner or going on a spiritual retreat alone or some trusted friends.

### 2. Invite people into your life

- Get to know them spiritually, but also personally. Know their story and invest time to develop deep relationships.

### 3. Pray for the people you are leading

- Paul said to Timothy, “I thank God, whom I serve as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.” (2 Timothy 1:3). Note how he says, it is ME praying to GOD about YOU.
- Prayer is often a last step we take as leaders, and we need to prioritize it and make it a first step in our leadership.

### 4. Challenge those we lead

- Challenge when you see someone’s potential that they aren’t using.
- Be intentional to see the God-given abilities that others have and stretch them in those areas.

### 5. Be a good listener

- Be available and be a safe place to be vulnerable. Allow people to talk through what is happening and simply be a sounding board.
- Encourage them to think through what God may be doing.
- Pray with them and for them. Be intentional to follow-up with them and let them know that you are continuing to pray for them.



## **Model Surrender:**

The best way to develop great character in others is to model great character yourself. The key is for you to be FULLY SURRENDERED to Christ because only the Holy Spirit can develop Christlike character within us. When you model humility, integrity, patience, grace and love, you will start to see those traits reflected in those around you that you lead.

Ask yourself: What attitude do I display? What behaviors do I exemplify? What choices do I make?

In John 13:1-17 we see Jesus in action. In the absence of a servant he took on the role of a servant and washed the disciples' feet. After washing the disciples' feet he concludes with this poignant lesson on leadership; *"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 13:14)

The essence of servant leadership is following Jesus and serving people. The tasks of leadership may vary in different areas of our lives. We will lead programs, people and projects. But the method of leading never changes. We don't move from servanthood on to something else. The silver thread running through everything we do is that of servant-leadership. Leadership that does not involve servanthood is not spiritual leadership. Once we stop serving, we stop walking in Christ's footsteps of leadership.

## **Support from Others:**

We are all walking this journey together, learning and growing in our faith every step of the way. We know that God has called each of you to this season of leadership, and it is not to be taken lightly. It is an honor to serve alongside you and walk with you as you make disciples. We are all working together to advance the gospel and impact those both in the community and in the church. We're often



working shoulder to shoulder, but we're not working soul to soul. We don't know what's going on in each other's hearts, and we neglect each other's spiritual health.

We don't want this to be true. Your Discipleship Director is available and eager to walk with you in this. Bring them in as much as you need them. We also know that as we create safe spaces within our groups, there will always be things that are beyond us. Things that are more involved and need greater attention are great opportunities to invite a pastor or other staff into the process. Forest Hill has an exceptional Care and Counseling Department that is also available to assess these needs.

Info and Contact information for our Care and Counseling Department:

**Leslie Long: 704.716.8775**  
**Pastor on Call: 704.716.8779**

### **Put into Practice:**

As we mentioned before, great leaders adopt a posture of:

**• Humility • Teachability • Curiosity • Intentionality**

- Think of a sphere where you are currently leading (in your family, at church, at your workplace or in other an organizations). In which of the areas above do you feel like you could use the most improvement?
- What is a next step that you could take to grow in this area?  
For example, what could it look like to pray intentionally for your group or the people you work with every day? This is part of caring well for them and being a servant leader in your actions before they even might take notice of the way you are leading them.

\*\* Much of the content for this competency is used with permission from:  
Mac Lake, *Leading Leaders* (Columbia, SC: 100 Movements Publishing, 2019), 26-49.