



PREP FOR CHARACTER

1. Meditate on the following Scriptures this week. Give thought as to why God focuses on the heart when considering leaders.
 - Proverbs 4:23 (NIV '84)
 - Proverbs 21:1 (NIV '84)
 - 1 Samuel 17:7 (NIV '84)
 - 2 Chronicles 19:9 (NIV '84)
 - Luke 16:15 (NIV '84)
2. Explain what role character plays in your view of leadership.

“The most important thing about you is not the things you achieve, it is the person you become.”¹

Being precedes doing. It is what is on the inside that should have profound influence on the outside. The internal qualities of a leader should shape the external metrics used to evaluate success.

General Norman Schwarzkopf once stated that “leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy.”

The Great Commandment, when harnessed with Jesus’ Great Commission (GC²), leaves us awestruck, focused, and purpose-driven. Jesus’ parting words to His disciples draw us into His redemptive passion and vision.

“Leadership consists not in degrees of technique but in traits of character.”² Leadership effectiveness depends on character. Character can be defined as a leader's sense of moral fortitude, an inner compass pointing true north that determines how a leader acts when no one else is looking. It reveals a leader's integrity, virtue and core values. At its root, character reflects the idea of etching, a chiseling from within, that defines a leaders' true identity.

In our work with leaders we've developed a simple tool to identify and assess the character strengths that lie within, the raw material that can be identified and championed, fostering a sense of health and growth.

¹ Ortberg, John. *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 54.

² <https://charactercounts.org/best-ever-quotes-on-leadership/> Lewis H. Lapham



CHARACTER

Why is it important to start here as an acquired skill of leadership health?

The answer to this question is found in the following passages. Read them and share your insights.

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV '84)

All a man's ways seem right to him, but the Lord weighs the heart.

Proverbs 21:1 (NIV '84)

"...The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

1 Samuel 17:7 (NIV '84)

"For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing and from now on you will be at war."

2 Chronicles 16:9 (NIV '84)

"He (Jesus) said to them (Pharisees), 'You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.'"

Luke 16:15 (NIV '84)



THINK

Character is an essential element of spiritual leadership. There are at least nine leadership essentials that consistently emerge at Fellowship when we talk about the character component of the Leader Profile.

1. Clarity.

We live in an uncertain world, and uncertainty creates discomfort and anxiety. Clarity creates a sense of hope and momentum. In times of uncertainty, clarity of vision fosters confidence and freedom as to who we are, where we are headed, and how we will get there. Time and again Scripture reveals that a relevant vision is crucial to the leadership of that generation of people. Moses provided an enslaved people a vision of a promised land and freedom, and they followed him. Nehemiah provided the citizens of a desolate city a vision of wall and restoration, and they followed him. Jesus provides a lost and broken humanity a vision of redemption and healing, and we are following him. The power of a God-given vision catapults us onto the frontier of God's activity. *"If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; but when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed."* - Proverbs 29:18 (MSG)

2. Gratitude.

It was the defining issue in one man's life. He was counted among the number of ten lepers Jesus healed in Luke 17. Realizing what had been done on his behalf, he returned to Jesus to express his deep gratitude. Noting that ten were healed, and inquiring as to the absence of the other nine, we see the high value Christ places on gratitude. There is such power in the two words "THANK YOU." They reflect an attitude of the soul, and a posture of the heart. Paul calls us not to be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present our request to God. (Philippians 4:6) Gratitude is to be a primary response when met with the circumstances of life.

3. Humility.

Chuck Swindoll tweeted, "Pride stinks! The problem is, the proud person is the only one who doesn't smell it." ³ Peter writes, "...Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'" -1 Peter 5:5 (ESV)

It is only in humility that we can rest in the sufficiency of God's grace and know the perfection of His power in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:1-10).

As the Fellowship Mosaic Congregation puts it, "All are broken, all matter, One gets the glory!"

³ <https://twitter.com/chuckswindoll/status/581441267936137216>

Session One
Character

4. Courageous Faith.

A courageous capacity to believe God for things only He can do, is a third essential. On the rare occasions when Jesus rebuked His disciples, a lack of faith was often the issue (Matthew 8:26, 14:31, 16:8). The author of Hebrews writes, “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” -Hebrews 4:16 (ESV)

5. Servant Leadership.

The goal of character assessment and development is Christ-likeness. His leadership model is our leadership model. Leadership is not an ascent to great achievement, but a descent into greatness in Christ's Kingdom. That greatness, according to Jesus, is defined by service. “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” -Mark 9:35 (ESV). Our “name nowhere, our fingerprints everywhere” is a value worthy of embracing.

6. Teachable Spirit.

We are life-long learners, and life is a series of teachable moments in the ways and person of Jesus Christ. Paul writes, “...what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach other also.” -2Timothy 2:2 (ESV)

7. Focus on Health and Reproduction.

Healthy things grow and multiply, whether it be in marriage, business, athletics, or spiritual leadership. Creating margin in life for self-assessment and growth is part of our leadership rhythm at Fellowship. It is likely your motivation for participating in Leadership Lab. To know how to put your thumb on the pulse of your spiritual health in order that you flourish is a desired outcome of the Lab!

Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as your are strong in spirit. -3 John 1:2 (NLT)

8. Extravagant Love and Generosity.

As believers, these are two hallmarks of life in Christ. It is from the extravagance of His heart that we know what love is. We have the capacity to love well, because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19) There is nothing tight-fisted, stingy, or chintzy when it comes to the love of God and how it is expressed. God is the perfect model of generosity, and when we are generous with others, it points them to Him. When we live as generous people, it is for His glory and the good of others.

9. Kingdom Thinking.

Kingdom thinking doesn't start with “I.” Rick Warren begins his book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, with these words, “It’s not about you.” Kingdom thinking and a Kingdom mindset always starts with God. It is about Him and the advancement of His Kingdom

Character Assessment

The character assessment evaluates an individual's capacity to lead from nine essentials modeled in healthy leadership cultures.

- Clarity
- Gratitude
- Humility
- Courageous Faith
- Servant Leadership
- Teachable Spirit
- Focus on Health and Reproduction
- Extravagant Love and Generosity
- Kingdom Thinking

The most important thing about you is not the things you achieve, it is the person you become. —Dallas Willard

1. I live with a clarity of purpose that profoundly affects my thoughts, actions, and relationships.

1 2 3 4 5

Rarely *Continually*

2. I easily default to gratitude as a primary response when met with leadership challenges.

1 2 3 4 5

3. I lead through the confidence of humility.

1 2 3 4 5

4. I possess a courageous capacity to believe God for things only He can do.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I would rather my “name be nowhere, my fingerprints everywhere.”

1 2 3 4 5

6. I am a lifelong learner and perceive life to be a series of teachable moments and God lessons.

1 2 3 4 5

Session One
Character

7. Knowing healthy things grow and multiply, I create margin in my life to assess my leadership health and reproduction.

1 2 3 4 5

8. I practice expressions of extravagant love and generosity for the Glory of God and the good of others.

1 2 3 4 5

9. My leadership reflects a core belief that it's about God and not me, the advancement of His kingdom and not mine.

1 2 3 4 5

Total: _____

CHARACTER SCORE	CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT	NEXT STEPS FOR GROWTH
30-45	Healthy Character Development	Keep Doing and Improving
15-29	Moderate Character Development	Improvement Needed
14 or Below	Character Flaws Evident	Coaching and Accountability Needed

Beware! Character Assassins are lurking. For every character champion that can be identified and celebrated, there is a character assassin lurking in the darker crevices of a your leadership heart and soul. Below are 9 lethal character assassins that contend with the champions assessed.

Champion

Purposeful
Grateful
Humble
Courageous Faith
Servant Leader
Teachable Spirit
Flourishing
Lovingly Generous
Living for a Greater Glory

Assassin

Compulsive
Entitled
Pride
Doubt & Cynicism
Controlling Dictator
Presumptive “Know It All”
Toxicity
Cheap & Stingy
Narcissistic

Next Best Steps. In order to keep the assassins neutralized, and the champions embraced and celebrated, consider taking these next best steps within 30 days.

1. Intentionally model 1 of the 9 Character Champions at home or work for 30 days.
2. Add to the list of Character Champions you possess that aren't on the list of 9. Develop your own statements with a 5 point rating scale for evaluation.
3. Get gutsy and ask a trusted friend/your spouse to do the “Trusted Friend” Character Champion Assessment found in Appendix B.

NOTE:

See Friend Assessment
Appendix B, page



SHARE

1. In which of the nine Leadership Essentials do you sense God is at work in your life right now?
2. Share with your LAB group or coach how you have seen the Leadership Essentials in action at Fellowship, in your workplace, and in Northwest Arkansas.