

AUTHENTIC BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

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I am sure you have noticed it! In today's rapid changing world there is an authentic leadership crisis, as well as a leadership crisis in the church. It is on a scale never experienced before. Back in 2007, Lee Iacocca titled his best selling book with a question: *Where Have All The Leaders Gone?* Six years later (2013) the question becomes even more relevant. Where have all the church leaders gone? Where will we find authentic leaders?

The leadership crisis has created the "warm body" approach to selecting and appointing leaders. "We must be flexible" is the new theme for selecting leaders; sadly, even in some congregations. The results of the "just anybody can lead" approach is creating holes in the old ship of Zion as she tries to maneuver through the rough waters of a lost world. The crew is jumping from the battle ship to the cruise, leadership is jumping too.

Names of once thriving local congregations are being added to the list of the twenty-four churches we read about in the New Testament that no longer exist. If those first century churches which were established by the Apostles and leaders they trained ceased to exist, how do we think we can survive locally without authentic biblical leadership? We cannot!

Jesus could have made the selection of leaders easier than He did. He could have selected men for His leadership team, gave them a pep talk, conducted a short course in leadership fundamentals, prepared them a manual with rules and guidelines, and sent them on their way; hoping they would succeed with their assignments. But He didn't.

Jesus knew that spiritual servant leaders, which is what God wants, aren't selected via the "warm body" or "who will volunteer" approach. The Master hand picked twelve men, men who from all outward appearance, didn't possess leadership potential to become part of a world changing movement. They would be more of a hindrance than an asset, if viewed from the world's standard. Jesus trained His leadership team for approximately three years; then the Holy Spirit came and continued their training.

What do I mean by AUTHENTIC?

The word *AUTHENTIC* is defined by the dictionary as: **1.** *Not false or copied, genuine and original, as opposed to something that is a fake or reproduction* **2.** *Trustworthy, shown to be true and trustworthy* **3.** *Legally valid because of necessary procedures that have been followed correctly.* It is easy to see that church leadership must have certain characteristics before it qualifies as authentic biblical leadership. A reading of Matthew 23 will remind us of how the

Pharisees failed to qualify as authentic biblical leaders. Jesus called them *blind leaders of the blind* (Matthew 15:12, 13).

Characteristics of Authentic Biblical Leaders

Jesus affirmed that a valid litmus test for determining genuineness is “fruit bearing”: *By their fruit you shall know them*. Since leadership functions through influence, this means that a leader’s authenticity is confirmed by what he SAYS and what HE does; with what he DOES being the most powerful part of his influence. As a church leader, leading by the book, he seeks to inspire, equip, and mobilize God’s people to fulfill the mission given by Christ (cf. Mark 16:15, 16). He is an out front dreamer with God’s marching orders burning in his heart (Jeremiah 20:8,9).

In support of his leadership position by the Book, the church leader will also exemplify the following characteristics (fruits) that confirm that he is an authentic biblical leader:

1. The Bible will be his first and foremost guide in determining his leadership principles and practices (cf. 2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:15-17).
2. The authentic biblical leader will develop and practice a biblical thinking agenda (Philippians 4:6-9; Jeremiah 6:19; Mark 7:21-25).
3. An authentic biblical leader will have the attitude and disposition of Christ (Philippians 2:4-9).
4. The authentic biblical leader will be a servant of others (John 13:1-12).
5. The authentic biblical leader will always speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).
6. An authentic biblical leader will pursue the work of equipping the church for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
7. An authentic biblical leader will be well trained, and a trainer of others (2 Timothy 2:1-3).
8. An authentic biblical leader will meet the qualifications prescribed in the Bible for his place in leadership (cf. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 6:1-9).
9. An authentic biblical leader *walks by faith and not by sight* (2 Corinthians 4:7).
10. An authentic biblical leader has as his primary mission in leadership the glorifying of God (Ephesians 3:21).
11. The authentic biblical leader is committed to the eternal and global vision God has for the church (cf. Isaiah 2:2-4; Matthew 28:18-20).
12. The authentic biblical leader is courageous and fearless (Acts 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 1:7).
13. The authentic biblical leader is a lover and doer of the truth (Proverbs 23:23; John 8:32; Matthew 4:1-4).

14. The authentic biblical leader is not reluctant to change (e.g. The Apostles changed from Law to grace, etc.).
15. The authentic biblical leader is sold-out to Christ and carrying a cross (Matthew 16:24).
16. The authentic biblical leader believes in the power of the Gospel to save lost mankind, as well as to keep the Christian saved (Romans 1;14-16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-6).
17. The authentic biblical leader is prepared to *defend the truth* (1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3).
18. The authentic biblical leader works to maintain unity in the church (Ephesians 4:1-7; Psalm 133).
19. An authentic biblical leader seeks to do good *unto all men* (Galatians 6:10; James 1:27).
20. An authentic biblical leader is an *imitator of God* (Ephesians 5:1).
21. An authentic biblical leader is a teacher of others (Hebrews 5:12; James 3:1-3).

There are additional characteristics of an authentic biblical leader. These 21 should serve as door openers to dig deeper into the subject. While it is true that there are no perfect leaders, it is also true that we must not settle for mediocrity or “warm body” leadership in the church. We must accept the challenge, and to accept the US Army’s slogan *to be all that we can be*. We must intentionally strive to be the authentic biblical leader God desires.

A positive leadership awareness practice would be to go back over these 21 characteristics and rate yourself. Rate yourself on a scale of **1** to **5**, with **1** being not at all and **5** being excellent. Authentic biblical leaders aren’t afraid to honestly rate themselves. How about you?

You can read more about this subject in my book ***Imitating My Father’s Leadership***, by going to the Amazon.com icon on my website.