JESUS ON LEADERSHIP

Becoming A Servant Leader



STUDENT EDITION

LifeWay
Biblical Solutions for Life

C. GENE WILKES

C. GENE WILKES

JESUS ON LEADERSHIP

Becoming A Servant Leader

STUDENT EDITION

LIFEWAY PRESS®
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

© Copyright 1999 LifeWay Press
Reprinted 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted in writing by the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed in writing to LifeWay Press, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0144

ISBN: 978-0-7673-9487-1
Item 001052573

Dewey Decimal Classification Number: 303.3
Subject Heading: Leadership

Printed in the United States of America

Student Ministry Publishing
LifeWay Church Resources
One LifeWay Plaza
Nashville, Tennessee 37234-0144

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, *New International Version*, copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. The 2000 statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message* is our doctrinal guideline.

A Spanish edition for adults (ISBN: 978-0-7673-9488-8) and a Spanish edition for students (ISBN: 978-0-7673-9487-1) also are available.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WEEK 1: DOWN FROM THE HEAD TABLE 5

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

WEEK 2: LEADERS WHO S.E.R.V.E.—PART 1 31

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms (1 Pet. 4:10).

WEEK 3: LEADERS WHO S.E.R.V.E.—PART 2 57

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me (2 Cor. 12:9).

WEEK 4: HOW TO E.Q.U.I.P. OTHERS 85

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Eph. 4:11-12).

WEEK 5: HOW TO SERVE IN T.E.A.M. MINISTRY 103

Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits (Mark 6:7).

INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this sentence, you may be a leader. Someone has handed you this workbook because he or she thinks you have the potential to become a leader in your youth group or church. You may be thinking they were wrong in their choice, but you have the potential of being a leader if you will follow the examples and teachings of Jesus on leadership.

You may think leadership among youth is confined to student body presidents or people chosen as athletic, music or organization leaders. You may also believe that if you are not a leader at school, there's no way you can lead at church. Leadership among God's people, however, is not limited to those whom the world elects or appoints as leaders. You can be a servant leader just like Jesus if you will pay close attention to the teachings in this workbook.

Jesus on Leadership, Student Edition, has been edited with you in mind. Stacey Whitt, youth minister at Legacy Drive Baptist Church, Plano, Texas, and Gene Wilkes, writer of the adult version of *Jesus on Leadership* and pastor at Legacy Drive, have edited this workbook to help you become a servant leader like Jesus. We have chosen stories of people just like you who are learning to lead like Jesus. We have tried in every way to make Jesus' teachings and examples of being a leader as clear as possible so you can apply them to your life at church, school, and home. We know the church needs leaders from your generation now more than ever. We are praying that God will show you where and how you are to serve as a leader in your youth group and church.

You are at a strategic time in your life. You are preparing to live as a responsible, godly adult. Every choice you make now will affect how you live as an adult. Our hope is that you take these next six weeks to learn to lead like Jesus. We want you to know how God is forming you into a unique servant leader will affect your life in a positive way.

As you begin, turn to page 127 in this workbook. There you see the four concepts you need to know in order to see the overview of this study. Those four concepts are servant leader, serve, equip and team. In week 1, you will learn seven principles of servant leadership from the life and teachings of Jesus. We will spend weeks 2 and 3 discovering how God made you as a unique servant leader by developing your own S.E.R.V.E. Profile. Weeks 4 and 5 answer the question, "What do servant leaders do?" The answer is, "They equip others for ministry and build a ministry team."

Now that you know where we are headed, let's go!

Down from the Head Table

WEEK 1:

When I was in high school, I ran for student body president. I ended up running against a good friend and another guy I thought would never have a chance to win. I made posters and asked people to vote for me. After the votes were counted, the guy I thought had no chance to win was elected president! I was devastated. I began to wonder if I would ever be a leader if I could not even win an election that made you a leader. *How could you lead, if people didn't elect you to lead, I wondered. How can you be a leader if you are never asked to sit at a head table and make a speech,* I also thought. I waited for another chance to be elected or appointed a leader.

Later in college, I decided to run for president of the service organization I had joined. Again, I ended up running against a good friend, and, yes, again, I was not elected president. This time my friend won, and I was elected sergeant at arms. I wondered if I would ever be a leader. I still thought you had to be elected to an office or sit at the head table at some awards banquet to be a leader. So, I waited for God to make me a leader.

Without boring you with all the details, I will tell you I have never been elected to any position of leadership and have sat at very few head tables. But, I am a leader. I am the pastor of a growing church that helps people know, share, and multiply Christ in the lives of others. I am a husband and father. Each of these rolls is a position of leadership. Each of these places gives me an opportunity to lead others.

Why do I tell you these facts about my life? I tell them to you because you may be thinking like I thought. If you don't get elected or invited to sit at a head table, you must not be a leader. Jesus, on the other hand, teaches us something different about being a leader among God's people. Jesus taught that service, not status is the goal of a leader who has Christ as his master.

Many churches and youth ministries struggle because they lack servant leaders. In too many churches today, head tables have replaced the towel and washbasin as symbols of leadership among God's people. Often those recognized as leaders hold positions elected by their friends and family. Some of these leaders love sitting at head tables and never go near the kitchen or nursery. Churches and youth groups need leaders who know how God has gifted them for service and who are willing to serve Christ's body. Churches and youth ministries need leaders who know their mission and can equip others to help them carry out that mission.

Churches and youth ministries need leaders who will step down from the head table and serve wherever they are needed. Churches in the 21st century need teenagers and college students who will stop following the world's concepts of leadership and adopt Jesus' teachings and examples of servant leadership.

Servant leadership is not an oxymoron![1] Servant and leader do stand together as a model for persons entrusted with the well-being of a group.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45, NIV).

Many churches struggle because they lack servant leaders. In too many churches today, head tables have replaced the towel and washbasin as symbols of leadership among God's people.

Leadership through service is how Jesus modeled and taught discipleship among His closest friends. True servant leadership begins by submitting to Jesus and obediently following His teachings and lifestyle as a leader. You can lead like Jesus only when you obey His teachings about leading as a servant.

When we observe Jesus' life, we see He was first servant to the Father's mission for His life. That mission was to be the Suffering Servant Messiah *(Isa. 53:11)*, to lay down *his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45)*. Jesus humbled Himself and became a servant to God's mission for His life *(Phil. 2:6-8)*. We also see that Jesus led by serving those He recruited to carry out the Father's mission after He ascended to heaven. Jesus was a leader, but the focus of His leadership was empowering others to live out God's plan, not their own agendas. He served His disciples with the vision, direction, correction, and resources needed to complete the mission the Father sent Him to do. Jesus was a servant to the Father's mission, and He led by serving those on mission with Him. Jesus was a servant leader. These observations about Jesus' life are the basis for our working definition of a servant leader:

A servant leader serves the mission and leads by serving those on mission with Him.[2]

Servant leaders in team ministry, that is our purpose together as individual members and as a church.

The purpose of this study is to help your church and student ministry add a service dimension to leadership as you discover, equip, and place servant leaders in all areas of your ministry. Jesus' teachings and modeling of servant leadership are the foundation for this study. Also, this study can lead members of the body of Christ to discover their role as servant leaders, and to equip them for team ministry. Servant leaders in team ministry, that is our purpose together as individual members and as a church.

My prayer is that churches will begin to honor and train leaders who willingly follow Jesus' teachings and model of servant leadership. My personal goal is to serve you and your church through this workbook and to help restore a biblical model of servant leadership in your church.

This Week You Will:

- Discover seven principles of servant leadership. (Days 1-4)
- Examine definitions of servant leadership and Jesus' teachings about humility. (Day 1)
- Examine Jesus' teachings about being first and being great. (Day 2)
- Observe Jesus' model of servant leadership through His actions on the night He was betrayed. (Day 3)
- Examine biblical models of shared leadership. (Day 4)
- Evaluate God's calling in your life to be a servant leader. (Day 5)

day 1

JESUS' TEACHINGS ON LEADERSHIP-PART 1

"Leadership is more than one person in a visible leadership role. It also involves service in quieter, less noticeable ways."[3]*–Wes Black*

Today You Will:

- Review the biblical concept of servant leadership.
- Examine Jesus' teachings about humility.
- Take inventory of your relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Study Jesus' model of humble service to all.

Today, we want to examine different ideas about leadership. We want to spend our time with biblical models of leadership and how Jesus taught and modeled leadership for His followers. Let's start with your impressions of a leader. Below you will find a list of character traits. Place a check beside those qualities you consider important in a leader.

❑ Honest	❑ Kind	❑ Fair	❑ Goal-oriented
❑ Humble	❑ Bold	❑ Caring	❑ Has Integrity
❑ Godly	❑ Above Average	❑ Serving	❑ Is Inspiring
❑ Dependable	❑ Emotional	❑ Decisive	❑ Cautious
❑ Cooperative	❑ Independent	❑ Loyal	❑ Intelligent

Return to the list and circle those characteristics that are present in your own life.

People know what they want in a leader. Some prefer that the leader be decisive or visionary. Others want their leader to be charming and kind to people. Some desire not to have a leader, thank you very much!

I want to highlight the trait of service. A leader with a heart for service serves the mission of God on his life and leads by serving those he leads in order for the group to complete its mission. This kind of leader leads by example and service rather than by telling people what to do.

Leadership in the kingdom of God is different from leadership in the world. It is still leadership, but those who lead in the kingdom of God look very different from those who lead by the world's standards. Life under the lordship of Christ has different values than life under the lordship of self. Therefore, kingdom leaders are people who lead like Jesus. They act differently than leaders trained by the world. Kingdom leaders are servant leaders because they follow Jesus, who *"did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45)*.

People prefer to follow those who help them, not those who intimidate them!

Jesus' ideas about leadership are different from the world's thoughts on leadership.

An attitude that keeps you from leading like Jesus is what we call "head table mentality." It is simply the attitude that you feel if you are seated at the head table then you must be more important than others. Head table mentality is also the belief that your goal is to sit at the head table. Important people and leaders sit up front. The ordinary people sit out with the others. The thought of sitting out with everyone else is not where you want to be! These attitudes prevent you from being a leader like Jesus. Here's why.

Jesus taught His disciples a valuable lesson about head tables and a humble spirit.

Jesus' Story About Humility

Read *Luke 14:1,7-11*. Then think about the following questions:

1. Where was Jesus when He told this story? *(Luke 14:1)*

2. Why did He tell the story? *(Luke 14:7)*

3. Put yourself in the disciples' sandals. What would be your response to Jesus' message in that place to those people?

Jesus told this story to His followers while they attended a meal at the house of a prominent religious leader. He noticed how the guests picked places of honor at the head table near the host. He chose this situation to teach His disciples how they should behave toward places of honor. Write the main point of each of the verses in the parable:

Verse 8:

Verse 9:

Verse 10:

Verse 11:

Jesus said that those who follow Him must first humble themselves. Any head-table recognition should come from others. Final recognition will come from God. The world says, "Work your way to the head table." Jesus says, "Take a seat in the back. I'll choose who sits up front."

The word *humble* in *verse 11* means to "make low or humiliate by assigning to a low(er) place."[4] Jesus called His disciples to lower themselves rather than exalt themselves. He made it clear that His followers were not to seek places of honor. Jesus' disciples wait for their Host to invite them to the head table. They do not seek high places on their own. The Bible states, *humility comes before honor (Prov. 15:33)*.

The first principle of servant leadership is: Servant leaders humble themselves and wait for God to exalt them.

You cannot apply this first principle of a servant leader to your own life unless you commit yourself to follow Jesus' teachings. You must decide whether or not you will design your life after the pattern of Jesus, or design your life around the best thinking and experience the world has to offer.

Decision Point: Before we go any further, you must settle this issue in your life. You must answer the question, "Who is Master of my life?" Here's why your answer to that question is basic to this study:

No one can be a servant without a master. You cannot be a servant leader as modeled by Jesus without Him as your Master. Jesus said you can't serve two masters. You will either hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to one and despise the other. *(See Matt. 6:24.)* Leaders without Jesus as their Master can only be self-serving, not serving to others.

Take a moment to examine your heart and answer the following questions:

1. Have I confessed my sinfulness and resistance to God's leadership in my life? ❑ Yes ❑ No

2. Have I confessed that Jesus is Lord of my life? *(See Rom. 10:9.)* ❑ Yes ❑ No

3. Do I live my life as if I am in control or as if Christ is in control? *(See Gal. 2:20.)* ❑ I am ❑ Christ is

4. Have I shown a willingness to humble myself before others, or am I happier when I earn a seat at a head table? ❑ I humble myself. ❑ I love earning my seat.

The answers to these questions help describe your relationship with Jesus Christ. The rest of this workbook will only be exercises in self will if Christ is not in control of every aspect of your life. If you want to settle this issue in your life right now, pause and ask Christ to be Lord and Savior of your life. Then, call your group's leader or your youth minister and ask this person to join you in prayer. Be prepared to share your decision at the next group meeting.

> You must decide whether or not you will design your life after the pattern of Jesus, or design your life around the best thinking and experience the world has to offer.

An Attitude Like Jesus

The apostle Paul asked the Christians in Philippi to serve each other like Jesus would serve them. Paul reminded his friends of their source of strength, fellowship, and unity in Christ. He wrote, *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5)*. Paul then described Jesus' humble service of taking on the form of a man and dying on the cross for others.

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

Read *Philippians 2:6-11*, which is printed below. Underline the words that describe how Jesus humbled Himself. Then go through the verses again and circle the words that tell how God exalted Him.

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The key phrase in the first half of this passage is, *he humbled himself (Phil. 2:8)*. Paul's term for *humble* is the same word Jesus used in His story to the disciples in *Luke 14:7-11*. Jesus taught humility because it was at the core of who He was. It was God's plan for His Son's life. The key phrase in the second half of these verses is, God *exalted him (v. 11)*. Paul's word for *exalt* is also the same word Jesus used in His story in Luke. God exalted His Son after Jesus humbled Himself in obedience to death on the cross. Peter, who was present as Jesus taught this lesson about humility recorded in *Luke 14*, told the early Christians to *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time (1 Pet. 5:6)*.

Servant leaders among God's people humble themselves in obedience to Christ. Exaltation is God's choice, not ours. Leaders like Jesus must have the humble spirit of Christ and must be willing to take the seats in the back. God will choose those who will be up front.

Personal Review

Prayerfully take time to consider your answers to the following questions.

- Am I trusted as a leader because people see me as a servant?
  ❑ Yes ❑ No
- Am I willing to wait on the invitation of the Host to sit at the head table? ❑ Yes ❑ No
- Do people see the humility of Christ in my life?
  ❑ Yes ❑ No

- Is Jesus genuinely Master of my life?
  ❑ Yes ❑ No
- Am I willing to humble myself like Jesus in order to allow God to accomplish His plan for my life?
  ❑ Yes ❑ No

Principles of Servant Leadership:

Principle 1: Servant leaders _____ themselves and wait for God to _____ them.

Summary

- The first principle of servant leadership is: Servant leaders humble themselves and wait for God to exalt them.
- True leadership begins with a servant's heart.
- Jesus taught His disciples not to seek places at the head table.
- Jesus must be your Master before you can be a servant leader like Him.
- Jesus modeled a servant's heart in His incarnation and His crucifixion.

[1]An oxymoron is a figure of speech in which opposite or contradictory ideas or terms are combined. A favorite example is *civil war* or *bitter sweet*.

[2]C. Gene Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Discovering the Secrets of Servant Leadership from the Life of Christ* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 1998), 18.

[3]A*n Introduction to Youth Ministry,* (Broadman Press, 1991), 123.

[4]William F. Arndt and Wilbur F. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 812.

Again, here is this week's memory verse, this time with a few of the words omitted. Complete the verse. As you complete today's work, read these words of Jesus aloud a few times. Spend a few more moments alone with God, and listen to Him speak to your heart concerning servant leadership.

"For even the _____ did not come to be _____, but to serve, and to ____ his life as a _____ for many"
(Mark 10:45, NIV).