

Essential Qualities of Leadership

In this chapter, J. Oswald Sanders reveals to us important leadership qualities that should be evident in the lives of those who exercise a spiritual leadership role. In this paper, I will be speaking about each of these qualities and will also share my thoughts on some of those qualities along with points that I need to add to my own life as a future spiritual leader.

J. Oswald Sanders gives us numerous qualities. They are Discipline, Vision, Wisdom, Decision, Courage, Humility, Integrity, and Sincerity. **Discipline.** This is essential because, without discipline, all other gifts that we have will never develop as they should. Leaders are people who have learned to obey the disciplines of those above them and also has taken on harder disciplines involved with their inner selves. Therefore rebellious and lazy people don't qualify to be a leader. **Vision.** Leaders with vision are people who have seen more and farther than what the eyes of others can see. These are the people who have most powerfully and permanently influenced their generation. Jesus saw in Peter what no one else saw: "*a prophet, saint and leader who would help turn the world upside down.*" **Wisdom.** Wisdom isn't just knowledge you have obtained rather it is applying that knowledge in moral and spiritual matters, in handling difficulties, in negotiating complex relationships. **Decision.** Another mark of a true leader is when they make a swift and clear decision once they have all the facts in. A leader must not be an impulsive person who is quick to declare a preference rather he/she first weighs the evidence they have and then make their decision on sound premises. **Courage.** Leaders require the highest kind of courage, always having moral

courage and often physical courage as well. Courage is a quality of mind that enables people to firmly encounter difficulties and danger without having fear and getting discouraged. The apostle Paul himself experienced fear yet didn't let it stop him from doing the Lord's work on the earth. **Humility**. This also is a hallmark of the spiritual leader. The Lord Jesus told His disciples to not follow the arrogant leadership that is seen in the world but to take on the role of a servant. A leader's humility should grow as the years go by like other attitudes and qualities. **Integrity and Sincerity**. The Lord wants His people to be transparent, open, and innocent of deceit.

In this chapter, J. Oswald Sanders speaks about qualities that are truly important in spiritual leadership. One point that Oswald spoke about is Humility. This is key for the life of every Christian, especially leaders in the church. One of the qualities that our Lord Jesus has is that He is humble, "*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart,*" Matthew 11:29. This is a good quality for all of us to have but isn't always the easiest to maintain. When I say this, I think of how many men and women whom God raised with a very strong anointing have fallen into the trap of pride. These people start thinking that because God uses them in miracles, signs, and wonders or because of the position they have, that they are the best of the best and that they have to look at everyone as inferior to them. We see this even in the Word of God with people like King Saul. Humility is necessary in order to maintain an intimate relationship with Lord because His Word tells us in Psalm 138:6, "*For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar.*" Therefore to lose that humility is absolutely devastating in the life of a believer and even more for a leader in the church of Christ.

When I see these qualities, I see that I need to work on a couple of them. One point that I need to apply to my life more is Discipline. I like how J. Oswald Sanders said “*Before we can conquer the world, we must first conquer the self.*” (61). This is a great truth that we cannot ignore. As someone who is called by God to be a leader, I have the responsibility to work on my inner man. Yet, I have seen a decline in my discipline when it comes to working on those areas in my life where I need to change. A reason for this is because of my lack of time management skills which have gotten better but it still needs work. I really need to discipline myself when it comes to my sleep schedule. I need to sleep earlier and also wake up earlier. This way I can have that intimate time with the Holy Spirit and not have schoolwork and other responsibilities interfere with that precious time. I also need to be more disciplined when it comes to seeking God. I feel like I used to push myself a little more when it came to prayer and reading God’s Word despite not having the desire to pray like some of us have experienced in the past.

Another point that I need to work on is Vision. I think it’s safe to say that I have a good vision when it comes to the calling God has over my life. I have dreamed big of where God will bring me in the future but I feel like I still need to work in this area. I say this because there are times where I am a little more pessimistic than optimistic. Not because I doubt God rather because I see my flaws and I feel like I can interfere with what God wants to do in my life. Sanders mentioned that “*Vision involves optimism and hope.*” (66). Therefore, I need to maintain that faith mindset that the Lord will finish what He started in me and will help me do my part in the fulfillment of His promises over my life.

These leadership qualities given by J. Oswald Sanders serve to show us what is expected of us while in a leadership role and leaves us with the impression that we need to work on those qualities that we are not strong in.