

? OPENING QUESTIONS:

- What are a few words to describe someone who is a leader?
- What are some misconceptions of leadership?

BIBLE BACKGROUND:

Leaders come from all different places, and they lead in all different ways. Yes, there are some things all leaders must do in order to be good leaders (like have integrity and character, and communicate with their followers), but there's no cookie cutter leadership profile. Leaders come from all different backgrounds. They aren't all pastors' kids. They didn't all grow up in the church. They aren't all A students—or F students for that matter. Leaders come with all kinds of personalities: introverts, extroverts, task-focused, relationship-focused. And leaders lead in different ways. Some are great at casting the vision from up front and rallying a crowd. Others inspire their teams through notes of encouragement or conversations over cups of coffee. Leaders are different.

Take a look at some of the great leaders in the New Testament. These are people who followed Christ deeply, influenced entire cities and countries, set the church in motion, and even gave up their lives for Christ. Here are some glimpses of where they came from, what their experiences were, and even a little bit of their personality.

Read each Bible passage and answer the questions below.

1. **Matthew 4:18–20**

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fisherman. "Come follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

Answer:

- What background did Peter and Andrew have?

- How do you think Peter and Andrew were viewed? What status did they have before following Christ?
- How might Peter and Andrew's background be positive or helpful in their leadership?

2. **Mark 2:14–15**

As he [Jesus] walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

Answer:

- What background did Levi have?
- How do you think Levi was viewed? What status did he have before following Christ?
- How might Levi's background be a positive thing when leading others toward Christ?

3. **Philippians 3:4b–6**

If anyone thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews' in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

Answer:

- What background did the Apostle Paul have?

- How do you think Paul was viewed? What status did he have before following Christ?
- When Paul turned his life around and followed Christ, what parts of his background could be helpful in his pursuit of Godly leadership?

4. **Acts 4:36–37**

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Answer:

- What background did Barnabas have?
- How do you think Barnabas was viewed? What status did he have?
- Who are the Barnabases in your school or church?



LIVE IT OUT: Leadership Profile

Take some time to build a leadership profile of yourself. Think through all the different parts of your life that can contribute to (or take away from) your influence of others. Answer the following questions, and then consider sharing your responses with a friend or mentor who can give you feedback or even add to your profile.

- What are some **experiences** you've had that equipped you to be a godly leader?
- Do you know your **spiritual gifts**? How can you use your spiritual gifts to influence others?

- What **talents** or **abilities** do you have? How can you use these abilities to influence others?
- What are you **passionate** about (what do you love to do)? How can you use that passion in your leadership?
- Who do you **connect** with that other people might struggle to connect with? How can you influence those people in a godly way?



APPLY IT:

Think back over your answers in your Leadership Profile. What is something you can do in the next week to lead (in a formal or informal leadership situation) that takes into account your special gifts and wiring?

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



PARTING THOUGHTS:

"We are all talented people. Anything whereby we may glorify God is a talent."

—J.C. Ryle

THIS WEEK I WILL...