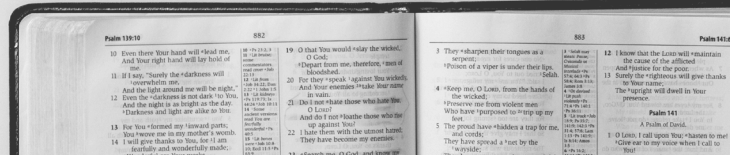


Words of Truth

Leadership in the Home & Church



Featured Authors

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Inside This Issue



Beginning in Genesis, the Lord emphasized leadership. He created Adam and Eve in His image and put a hierarchy of leadership in place. From Creation to Revelation, it is clear that leadership matters

to God. Thus, the 21st-century church must understand home and church leadership. Strong families lead to strong churches. The Gospel provides the foundation for both. In this issue, our authors offer excellent articles on leadership in the home and church:

- ◆ Dr. Ted Burleson reminds you of the importance of fathers in the home. Leadership in our families begins with strong fathers.
- ◆ Dr. Kirk Brothers helps you understand a working definition of Christian leadership. This definition allows you to put principles of leadership into practice.
- ◆ Ryan Gallagher addresses the keys to leading a faithful Youth and Family ministry. He has many years of practical experience in this area.
- ◆ Dale Jenkins challenges elders and congregations to lead during difficult times. The pandemic challenged churches in many ways. Dale's timely article exhorts both elders and congregations.
- ◆ Mark Posey provides an excellent discussion on gender roles & church leadership in our Q & A section.

It is my prayer that you will find this issue to be helpful and encouraging as you study the importance of biblical leadership – JG

Fathers as Leaders in the Home

Dr. Ted Burleson, Hamilton, AL

There are many important days in a man's life. Birthdays, important dates, and the day he became a Christian are all red-letter days. If he is blessed to become a father, that is a day his responsibilities increase dramatically. In his instructions in Ephesians 6:1-4 about the family, Paul places a significant obligation on fathers. The opening statement addresses children, yet the parents largely determine the respect they receive from their children.

Leaders in the Home Set the Right Moral Standards

Many today have forsaken absolutes in immorality, and what feels good has replaced it. A satanic spirit of looseness has invaded marriage and family. It is a small step from the spirit of looseness to unfaithfulness in marriage and being unfit as parents. Who thinks fathers can be good to their children while participating in an adulterous relationship? Can daddy and mommy make up this divided love and affection between their children and these fleshly encounters? There is more than one way for a parent to die in the heart of his/her children.

Have we stooped so low in our morals that we think a marvelous father and an adulterous father come in one package? Faithful fathers who provide leadership in the home keep their marriage vows. The best thing a father can do for their children is to love God and the children's mother. In Ephesians 6:4, Paul did not have fornicating fathers in mind.

Fathers Must Discipline without Getting Angry

Paul instructed fathers, "Provoke not children to anger" (Colossians 3:21). James explains, "For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (James 1:20, NASB). The man who is filled with wrath is not disposed to obey God. Children who are led to wrath by their fleshly father will be in no disposition (will not grow up in a disposition) to love their fleshly father or their Heavenly Father and pursue truth and honor right.

Firmness is a must for a father, but it must be with fairness. As fathers, we must realize that our

children make mistakes and that we want them to undo their mistakes when possible. However, in discipline, we may be too harsh. Fathers should not act in anger. Driving a child into anger and discouragement is not a successful child-rearing plan.

Fathers, as leaders in the home, are to bring up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Fathers should offer instruction to their children (Luke 2:52; Proverbs 22:6). Fathers provide leadership in the home by training their children how to make a living and a life. Fathers need to exhibit good self-care, service, and kindness to others. The best way of providing this leadership is through example

A successful approach for fathers who are leaders in the home is to say, "Do what I do." It is easier for a child to obey a father who obeys the Heavenly Father. Why should children obey their parents? Children need to see an example in dad.

How Can Fathers be Leaders in the Home?

For a father to be a leader in the home, he needs to walk with God like Enoch and Noah (Genesis 5:21-24; 6:9) and like Abraham (Genesis 18:19). Fathers need first to love the Lord. Moses directed parents to teach their children to love the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:5-9). Note what Joshua said about his house (Joshua 24:15). Sadly, many children have their first drinking experience at home.

Fathers who are leaders in the home will encourage their children to increase in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man (cf. Luke 2:52). Godly fathers must be men in which the word of God abides (1 John 2:14). Fathers who lead in the home who live a good example before their children.

Hudson Nichols said that if only two men are in heaven, "daddy" will be one of them. Fathers, are you a dad who is setting his sights on heaven? Would you be the kind of father your children need that God approves? The ultimate goal for fathers is that our children and we are seated together on Christ's right hand in judgment and heaven forever.

How Do You Define Leadership?

Dr. Kirk Brothers, Florence, AL

Definition determines doing! Joseph C. Rost, in his book *Leadership for the 21st Century*, laments the fact that there is no standard definition of leadership that is used by all (1993, 99). He then, of course, proposes his definition as “the” definition. How would you define leadership? More specifically, how would you define spiritual leadership? Let me share a few things others have said about leadership to get your mental juices flowing.

Seminary president Albert Mohler states, “I believe that leadership is all about putting the right beliefs into action, and knowing, on the basis of convictions, what those right beliefs and actions are. This book is written with the concern that far too much of what passes for leadership today is mere management. Without convictions, you might be able to manage, but you cannot really lead” (2012, 26).

In *Christian Leadership Essentials*, edited by David Dockery, university president Robert Sloan states, “Leaders shape and influence people, institutions, and events. Leaders and leadership are determined not by the number of followers but by the changes effected over time for the good of God’s world” (2011, 8).

Dr. Michael S. Wilder was one of my professors in my doctoral program. He wrote a book with one of his fellow professors, Dr. Timothy Paul Jones. Here is their definition of the Christian leader’s function and purpose: “The Christ-following leader—living as a bearer of God’s image in union with Christ and his people—develops a diverse community of fellow laborers who are equipped and empowered to pursue shared goals that fulfill the creation mandate and the Great Commission in submission to the Word of God” (*The God Who Goes Before You*, Wilder and Jones 2018, 16).

Greg Ogden and Daniel Meyer offer helpful insight into spiritual leadership when they say, “Christian leadership is Christlike influence” (*Leadership Essentials*, 2007, 9).

One of my favorite definitions of leadership comes from another former professor, Kenneth Gangel. Dr. Gangel defines spiritual leadership as “the exercise of one’s spiritual gifts under the call of God to serve a certain group of people in achieving the goals God has given them toward the end of glorifying Christ” (Gangel 1997, 44).

What did Jesus say about leadership in the Gospels?

♦ “And he said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Instead, let the greatest among you become as the

youngest and the leader as one who serves” (Luke 22:25).

♦ “The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me” (John 10:11-14)

With the above in mind, my definition of spiritual leadership is: “Spiritual leadership describes the actions of a servant leader who follows God’s example and uses God’s gifts to guide people toward God’s goals for God’s glory.” Let’s break it down:

- ♦ **“Actions”** – Leadership is about doing something, not just having power.
- ♦ **“Servant-leader”** – Spiritual leaders lead for the benefit of the led.
- ♦ **“God’s example”** – He shows us how to be leaders; integrity is essential.
- ♦ **“God’s gifts”** – Leadership ability is from God (whether given through biological, experiential, or educational means).
- ♦ **“Guide people”** – Leaders are influencers (my friend, David Shannon, describes leaders as “people movers”).
- ♦ **“God’s goals”** – If we are spiritual leaders, our goals should be God’s.
- ♦ **“God’s glory”** – The purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21).

I encourage you to spend some time in scripture, prayer, and reflection and then write down your definition of spiritual leadership. It may be one of the most important things you do as a leader. Now that you have heard my definition, what is yours?

I like to whittle. I start with a chunk of wood, envision the spoon or butter knife that might be in the wood, and carve away what is not a spoon or knife. The process starts with a chunk of wood. My definition of spiritual leadership does not have to be your definition. Still, it may be able to serve as a chunk of spiritual wood that you can use to envision and carve your definition of leadership. Remember that definition determines doing. How we define leadership will determine how we do leadership.

Shepherd the Flock: A Study of 1 Peter 5:1-4

Justin Guin, Double Springs, AL

James A. Garfield is credited with saying before taking the office of the presidency of the United States, "Today, I am stepping down from the most important office in the world, an elder in the church, for the second most important, the presidency of the United States." Does the twenty-first-century church have the same respect for elders as President Garfield? Elders are God's men commissioned to oversee Christ's blood-bought faith family. They seek to shepherd the flock by setting an example and seeking the best for the souls under their oversight (cf. Heb. 13:17). Just as the Ephesian elders, God commands them to be alert, watching for themselves and the flock they are pastoring (Acts 20:28).

When studying the New Testament about elderships, churches are familiar with 1 Timothy 3:1-8 and Titus 1:5-9. Every man who serves as an overseer must meet all of the qualifications in some capacity. These men must have observable godly behavior (1 Tim. 3:2-3) and are respected by those who are outside the church (v. 7). They must lead their families well, for the home is the proving ground for their capability to shepherd the body of Christ (vv. 4-5). They cannot be novices in the faith because elders help individuals and congregations navigate difficult situations (v. 6). Due to the difficulty of their work, their character matters. It must be unshakeable.

But, what do elders do? A few years ago, a speaker at a ministry workshop said, "Preachers do the elder's job in some congregations. Elders carry out the tasks of the deacons, and deacons have no idea what they're supposed to do." He said this "tongue in cheek," but this statement has some validity. Is the church aware of what elders are supposed to do in the local congregation? A study of 1 Peter 5:1-4 will help you better understand the work of an overseer and how the church should respond to their leadership.

First, an elder must shepherd the church. In the Greek text, there is only one imperative verb in these four verses. It is "shepherd the flock." The word "shepherd" means to lead someone out to pasture to provide sustenance (Danker, 843). As he pastors the Lord's church, an elder guides, feeds, protects, and governs God's people. The eldership must maintain a steady diet of sound doctrine for the church to feast upon

(cf. Titus 2:1). "Sound" refers to that which is healthy. Sound doctrine leads to healthy churches, and healthy churches strengthen Christians to live holy, godly lives.

As Peter continues his letter, he explains how an elder must carry out the command to "shepherd the flock" (v. 2). They must do so "with oversight." The verb episkopeo refers to accepting responsibility for the care of another person (Danker, 379). Oversight is more than making decisions, although that is an essential part of their task. Note also Hebrews 13:17, "Obey your leaders and submit [to them]--for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account--so that they will do this with joy and not with groaning, for this would be unprofitable for you" (LSB). Overseeing a congregation has eternity in mind for decisions, actions, and teaching in the present. Elders oversee your soul. Your soul is worth more than anything in this world (Matt. 16:26). As elders lead the church, they must always be mindful of this fact.

Peter also reminds you that the attitude of an overseer is as vital as carrying out his God-given responsibilities (vv. 2b-3). They willingly accept the duties that come with the responsibility of leading the Lord's church. Paul wrote in 1 Tim. 3:1 that an overseer must "desire the office." This text helps you better understand that passage.

Furthermore, an elder is not motivated by monetary gain or power. Instead, they are eager to lead others in their faith by setting an example for others to imitate. They seek to do what pleases Christ (v. 4). They take up the mantle of 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ." This verse is simple but has profound application. It is no small feat.

Why would someone take on this responsibility? Peter concludes, "[T]hey will receive an unfading crown of glory" (v. 4). Elders deal with difficult circumstances, sleepless nights, and discouragement. But, their reward is eternal. Thus, the church must willingly submit to their oversight (v. 5) because these men love the Lord, His church, and His divinely inspired word. May God give the church more qualified men up for the task of shepherding the Lord's church.

Leadership During Hard Times

Dale Jenkins, Spring Hill, TN

LEADERSHIP is always challenging. It is more challenging in a time of crisis. But when the world seems crumbling, the challenges grow exponentially. The last nearly three years have presented us with a global pandemic, heightened racial tensions, a poker-hot political environment, and a moral environment run-amok!

In the midst of it all, church leaders have done their best to make the wisest decisions for their flocks. They stormed heaven with prayers. They have searched their souls for the right decisions. Yet, in the midst of it ... every eldership I know has had stones thrown their way. We, through The Jenkins Institute, have counseled hundreds of elderships directly through all of this, and we have yet to find an eldership who has not been criticized and castigated by some for their decisions. It matters not the decision. There are loud and very insistent voices crying out that they made the wrong decision. Still, in the scrum of it all, elders have humbly and sacrificially done the best they could do.

So the word of the day has been “recovery” or “rebound.” Churches are wanting to know how to come back, how to get to where they were. Might I offer three suggestions for THEM (elders, shepherds, overseers), then three for us (those of us who are not elders), then we will close with a few general observations about congregations that we have seen that have thrived and those that have struggled through this time.

Three Words for Effective Shepherds

1. Love the flock: The pandemic didn't MAKE anything happen. I've called it The Great Revealer. Marriages, businesses, congregations, and individuals that have struggled in the pandemic were in trouble before the pandemic. It just brought to light what was already there. Just as the Good Shepherd cares for His Sheep, those serving under the Good Shepherd must mimic Him. There are sheep who are easy to love. They respond well, they serve faithfully, they follow the shepherds, but if the Chief Shepherd once said that if we love only those who love us, only the lovable, we are no better than the heathens (Luke 6:32; Matthew 5:46). There is a human tendency to mentally mark those who take a different approach, suggest we might be wrong, or don't readily follow our thought patterns or direction. But we are not trying to be like others. We are striving to be like our Father (Matthew 5:48). The Lord commanded that the second most

important thing we do is to love others (Matthew 22:34-39). So, that person who has not come back to services for “fear” but who goes to Walmart, work, school, and ballgames. Even if there must at some point be discipline (Romans 11:22), there must always be love. Seek to find out if the members see you as loving.

2. Effective does not mean perfect leadership. There was only one perfect (Romans 3:23). Acknowledge when mistakes are made: It takes a lot to be a leader in the church. The Japanese have a term “*mentsu*” that disallows a man from admitting wrong or being embarrassed over a statement or decision in public. We call it “saving face.” But we are not of that (or this) culture. We are of God. And godly men admit it when they have made a mistake. The eldership who stands before the congregation and says something along the line of “We prayed about this and discussed it, and we thought we were making the best and wisest decision, but we were wrong,” will be greatly respected. It is when we refuse to correct an honest mistake or when we refuse to admit that we could be wrong that we lose the respect of God's People. If during the last two years or so you tried and failed, you swung and missed, or you did what you thought was best and it turned out it wasn't, the VERY best thing you can do is admit it, ask for patience, and humbly move forward. You'll be amazed at how God's People move forward.

3. Unleash the flock: I'd suggest to you that people are indeed tired of hearing about the pandemic. They are ready to move on. So, let's stop talking about coming back. Let's talk about going forward. A leader leads. They are out front, they are not wallowing in the past but pushing toward the future. What dreams are you as a leadership putting before the congregation? What goals are you setting for them to reach? What outreach efforts are you capitalizing on? Let's move forward. That is what God's People do (Philippians 3:14).

So, love, pray, and empower. It is time to come back!
(Continued on page 7)

Key to Leading a Faithful Youth and Family Ministry

Ryan Gallagher, Hamilton, AL

Seventeen years ago, the most extensive longitudinal study on teenagers' faith was conducted and published as the National Study of Youth and Religion. The results of the NSYR were a mixed bag. On the one hand, there appears to be a somewhat "positive view of religion" by teenagers, but the overall picture is bleak[1]. Teenagers are increasingly less spiritually minded and struggle to find their moorings during a crisis of faith. Many factors can account for the findings of the NSYR, such as the role of social media and the spread of secular thought throughout society. However, the church's role is never to bow to current standards of thinking but to "set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2 ESV). Much like the response of the early church to appoint men who helped in the daily distribution of food to the Grecian widows in Acts 6, the church must respond to Satan's attack on our youth.

The church must recognize the importance of ministry to the young. One of the few instances scripture tells us that Jesus was angry or "indignant" occurred when his disciples blocked children from being brought to him (Mark 10:13-16). Jesus illustrates the principle that believers must come as humble children desiring the kingdom. Still, he also pointedly expresses how important they are as "[H]e took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them" (Mark 10:16). The Psalmist calls children a "heritage from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). Timothy is an excellent example of someone who had "from childhood" been taught "the sacred writings" (2 Tim 3:15). His teaching came from a godly mother and grandmother in Eunice and Lois.

As was the case with Timothy, a strong emphasis on the role of the family in modeling and communicating faith to young people must be stressed. As far back as the days of Moses, we read of the necessity of faith-building exercises from parents to their children. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, The Law instructed parents regarding what to teach their children. First, an emphasis on monotheism and the determination not to mix with other faiths must be emphasized (Deut. 6:4). Second, one must love God with "all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5). Third, the children must be taught these things at all moments. Notice the verbs used: "sit," "walk," "lie down," and "rise up" (Deut. 6:6). Parents should be using teachable moments from life to lead the faith of their children. Fourth, Moses instructs parents to

make visual reminders of their faith everywhere they go to instill faith that does not pause when away from home or the congregation (Deut. 6:8-9).

What about those who do not come from a faithful, Christian family? Can those from a Christian home receive further encouragement from other devoted brothers and sisters? While the church cannot fully serve as true surrogates to the home, I believe God provided us with the church, in his wisdom, to aid in these endeavors. Titus speaks of older women teaching younger women, and the implication is the same for older men to teach younger men. The foundation for any successful youth ministry must be based on the ministry's ability to train and equip our young people to develop a faith that will last. A youth ministry can be fun and attractive to outsiders, be a great social outlet for teenagers looking for fellowship, and be a supportive environment to share and grow during difficult times. But if the teaching of God's Word is neglected and an atmosphere of isolation from the rest of the church is instilled, it will atrophy from the body, and only harm will result.

Teenagers today face unparalleled challenges and an abundance of temptations that earlier generations did not endure. As the body of Christ, we are encouraged to "consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (Heb 10:24 ESV). Youth and family ministry, which emphasizes parental models of faith, entrusts further instruction to other faithful believers, and commits to building one another up will significantly expand the borders of God's kingdom.

[1] Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 17.

Leadership During Hard Times (Continued)

Dale Jenkins, Spring Hill, TN

Now, A Few Words for the Rest of Us

Thank you. If you are reading this, I imagine you have persevered through these rough few months. What we at TJI have seen is that the church is strong, resilient, and very healthy. This does not surprise us, for even with the voices of woe that scream through some of our papers and institutions, Matthew 16 is clear, concise, and bold. Even the forces of hell itself cannot hold back the progress of the Kingdom (vs. 17-19). In many, many congregations attendance has completely recovered, contributions have dramatically increased, and they have more young families and little children than in years and years. The love that swells from the time apart, the thrill of worship, and the joy of the Lord is overwhelming.

When it comes to your elders/shepherds, cut them some slack. I know something about your elders: they are not perfect. You know that, too, at least intellectually. And we are okay with that reality until it is our elders or until the mistake affects us. They are human. If they didn't do something during the pandemic, forgive them and move forward. Love them for their work's sake (1 Thessalonians 5:13) and let them love you.

Get to work. It's time too. Brothers and sisters, let's see opportunities, let's spread the Gospel, and let's use the skills God has given us to do His Work. It must go forward, and He put you in His Kingdom for a role and a purpose (1 Corinthians 12:18).

Churches which flourished during the last several months have a few common characteristics: They have remained united. They have not allowed Satan to divide them. They found creative and, often, new ways to serve when the situation put obstacles in front of them. They have remained optimistic and have not swallowed the concept that we live in a post-Christian world or that the church cannot survive without "getting on the right side of history (i.e., compromising the Scriptures for culture's sake). They focus on Jesus. They worship in spirit and truth. And they DO SOMETHING!

We all have been blessed to have the Gospel delivered to us and to be a part of the greatest Kingdom that has or ever will be (Daniel 2:44; 1 Corinthians 15:24). Let's love the Lord's church and behave as we do. Then the Kingdom will thrive.

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ASK A BIBLE QUESTION

QUESTION: Does Galatians 3:28 make “male and female” irrelevant concerning leadership roles in the home and church? Aren’t qualified women equally eligible to serve as elders, deacons, and preachers?

ANSWER: God’s original design for humanity, established at creation, is summed up in 1 Corinthians 11:3, “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” Galatians 3:28 addresses the equality of males and females only concerning their access to salvation; it does not apply to the question of role distinctions. God assigns roles of headship and submission to husbands and wives, respectively (Eph. 5:22-24). He excludes women from positions that involve teaching men or roles that involve having authority over men in the Church (1 Tim. 2:12).

The sole significance of Galatians 3:28 is salvation. Anyone who is ONE WITH CHRIST inherits the blessing of salvation. It no longer matters if one is a Jew or a Greek, slave or free, a male or a female. All baptized believers are united with Christ and thereby inherit salvation. God has chosen men to be elders (1 Tim. 3:1), deacons (1 Tim. 3:8), and preachers (2 Tim. 4:2) within the Church. Paul gives two reasons for this in 1 Timothy 2:11-14: first, “For Adam was formed first, then Eve” (v. 13); second, “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (v. 14). However, those who wrongly assume that salvation equality requires functional, or role equality should read 1 Peter 3:1-7, which clearly shows that equality of salvation (v. 7) does not imply equality of roles (vv.1-6). There are no examples in the New Testament of women ruling as elders or deacons of churches, nor do we see examples of them serving as preachers of congregations.

-Mark Nichols Posey
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The words of *Truth*

The Words of Truth

is a bi-monthly publication overseen by the elders of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper, Alabama. It is dedicated to the promotion and defense of New Testament Christianity.



The Words of Truth

is sent free to all upon request.

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