

# What We Do Matters... Who We Are Matters More!

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“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it”  
(Proverbs 22:6).

This verse, directed at parents, says it is a parent’s responsibility to teach a child what is right and wrong, avoid evil, and pursue Godliness. The result, says Solomon, is when the child reaches adulthood, they will retain the lessons of Godliness they learned as children.

But, this verse also has a direct application to us as leaders today. My paraphrase of this verse applied to leaders is, *“Train up an employee in the way he should go; and when he becomes a leader, he will not depart from it.”*

I firmly believe in the responsibility of a leader to mentor and develop leaders in their organizations. As older leaders, we must train young employees, teaching them what is right and wrong; to avoid evil and pursue Godliness. The result is when they become leaders, they will retain the Godly leadership lessons they learned as young employees.

## 2 Reasons Leaders Fail to Develop

Most leaders agree it is their responsibility to train and develop younger leaders in their organization. If leaders accept training and development as their responsibility, why do we have so many lousy, incompetent leaders today? I believe the leadership development system fails for two reasons:

- 1) Too many leaders do not have a strategic plan to train younger employees.
- 2) Worse, they do not lead by example. Leaders tell their younger employees, *“Do as I say, not as I do.”*

When leaders do not have a strategic plan to train and develop younger leaders, young employees learn from watching senior leaders.

Since employees learn more by example than they do by words, the *“Do as I say, not as I do”* training dooms younger employees to fail as leaders. For example, a leader cannot say to a young employee that integrity and honesty are essential leadership traits if the employee hears the leader lying to bosses and cheating on expense reports.

## Who We Are as Leaders Matters More!

Although what we *do* as leaders matters, who we *are* as leaders matters more! We cannot teach leadership traits we do not possess ourselves.

Teaching the disciples, Jesus said, “...*what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander*” (Matthew 15:18-19).

What we do as leaders reflects who we are as leaders!

So, while we must invest in the training and development of younger employees, the process begins not with them, but with us, in our hearts. Throughout life, we must demonstrate, in person and through our actions, the leader we want our younger employees to become.

- The first step in training younger employees is to work on ourselves. We need to model the exact leadership we expect from our young employees.
- The second step in training our younger employees is to invest time in their development.

## **Leadership Development Is Intentional!**

Training future leaders is an intentional, strategic process; it cannot be left to chance.

Think about how Jesus trained the disciples.

- First, He invested significant time with them. Jesus spent three years, practically 24 hours a day, seven days a week, teaching the disciples through His words and His actions.
- Second, training future leaders must be intentional! Jesus didn't leave the training of the disciples to chance. He specifically taught them what He expected of them every step of the way and held them accountable when they missed the mark.

## **Do You Want to Train Up Godly Leaders?**

To train a generation of Godly leaders, you must do three things:

- 1) Who you are matters! So, start with who you are. You cannot impart to others what you do not do yourself. Lead using the example you want employees to follow.
- 2) Be intentional and strategic as you train employees in the way they should go as leaders. Training up future Godly leaders is far too important to leave it to chance!
- 3) Spend time with your young employees. Developing the next generation of leaders cannot be done in an hour or two once a month. Remember, Jesus invested thousands of hours in training the disciples before He let them go out on their own.

If we leaders take the time to be intentional and strategic in the way we train the next generation of leaders, we will leave the world a better place! What we do as leaders matters!

It all starts with us!