CHRIST-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

Course One: Leading a Healthy Church Culture

Dr. Rick Sessoms
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Watch the Video (20:57)

Introduction

Two-fold focus of the course

Culture is central

Introduction of speaker

Hebrews 13:7-8 (NIV84)

7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Remember your leaders

Discipline of remembering

Pentateuch

Joshua 4

1 Corinthians 11
Remembering God’s faithfulness

Remember the outcomes of their way of life

Imitate their faith

Jesus Christ is the same

**After the Video – Reflection Questions**

1. What do you hope to gain from taking this course?

2. What is your definition of a Christ-centered leader? of a healthy church?

3. What types of memories most easily come to mind? How can we do a better job of remembering God’s faithfulness on a day-to-day basis?

4. Can you remember a time when you chose to look to the “long view” rather than meet the immediate need in your life? What makes this such a difficult thing to do?

5. How does the unchanging nature of Christ give you hope as a leader?

*The primary role of the church leader is to craft and care for the culture of the church.*
Session 2 – Remember Your Leaders

Before the Video – Reflection Questions

1. Before viewing the second session, think about the leader who has impacted you most profoundly. Who is that leader? What is the one leadership characteristic that impacted you so much?

2. What patterns did you notice in the life of this leader? Were you most influenced by their skills or their character?

Watch the Video (20:22)

After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. In what ways is your story like Rick’s story? How is it different?

2. After viewing Session Two spend some time in prayer thanking God for the people that have impacted your life. Thank God for the leaders in your life and for His faithfulness to you.

Jesus is faithful to raise up leaders like you and me.
Session 3 – Global Trends

Watch the Video (15:08)

Global Trends Affecting Leadership

1. Rising Cynicism

2. Shifting Power

3. Changing Contract

After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. Have you experienced these trends yourself? Describe how you have seen these play out in your own life or your community.

2. “Those with technology have more power than those with titles.” In the context of the church community, has this statement proven to be a true? How have you seen this play out in the church? in the world?

Additional Resources:


Complete the Ask Yourself survey before moving on to Session 4.
Ask Yourself . . .

1. Which of the following has had the greatest impact on you as a leader?
   a. Formal education
   b. Seminars/conferences
   c. On-the-job training
   d. Mentoring/coaching

2. During times of scarce financial resources, what would the staff of your organization say is most likely to get cut? (Rank from Most Likely-1 to Least Likely-5)
   a. New equipment/facilities
   b. Administrative support
   c. Research and development
   d. Employee benefits
   e. Personnel

3. Is prayer used as a business or team strategy in your organization? (select one)
   a. Never
   b. Rarely
   c. Sometimes
   d. Usually
   e. Always

4. How would people in your organization perceive leadership’s decision-making process? (select one)
   a. Decisions are isolated at the top
   b. Decisions are made with a small team
   c. Everyone’s ideas are usually sought before making decisions
   d. The leaders usually defer decisions to others
5. Which of the following does your organization currently measure? (select all that apply)
   
a. Overall sales/profits/productivity
b. Individual employee performance
c. Employee growth
d. Ethical behavior

6. How often would people in your organization say that the leaders demonstrate Jesus’ “servant” model of leadership? (select one)
   
a. Never
b. Rarely
c. Sometimes
d. Usually
e. Always

7. What would the staff of your organization say that the management/leadership team prioritizes? (rank from most = 1 to least = 5)
   
a. Meeting business objectives
b. Making cost and schedule commitments
c. Personal growth and learning
d. Balanced life
e. Value and worth of each employee

8. When critical incidents occur in your organization, how would the staff describe the leader(s) typical default mode? (select one)
   
a. Seek the truth and fix the problem
b. Blame others
c. Sweep the problem under the rug and hope it goes away

Course One: Leading a Healthy Church Culture
9. Which of the following statements BEST describes your organization’s perspective on the development of your future leaders? (Select one)
   
   a. This is a job for Human Resources
   b. We need to solve this problem within the next six months
   c. We believe in developing leaders, but it’s not an urgent priority right now
   d. Our leaders are currently demonstrating a long-term commitment to mentoring potential next-generation leaders.

10. What behavior would your employees say that the leaders reward in your organization? (rank from Most=1 to Least=4)
    
    a. Meeting financial / production goals ___
    b. Functioning effectively as a team ___
    c. Making good ethical decisions ___
    d. Making a positive impact in a coworker’s life ___

11. Which of these leadership styles BEST describes the leaders of your organization? (Select one)
    
    a. Controlling
    b. Isolated
    c. Engaging

12. Would employees of your organization say that the leaders are committed to align the organization’s priorities to biblical values? (Select one)
    
    a. They would say the leaders absolutely committed to biblical values.
    b. They would probably say the leaders not committed to biblical values.
    c. They would say it depends.
    d. I am not sure what they would say.
Watch the video (6:51) and follow along as the case study is read.

Case Study*

The crowd listened attentively as the program began. This celebration was organized to recognize Dr. Robert Avella and his 20 years of successful ministry. In addition, Dr. Avella was to be ordained as the president of the Grace of God denomination in the country of Alcatia.

Praise for Dr. Avella was deserved in many ways. Dr. Avella had been a young, gifted Christian leader. He had been a consistent voice for integrity and change in the church and in his community. He had founded the Fishers of Men Ministries (FMM) as a ministry of equipping church leaders to reach their own people.

Everyone rose to their feet as Dr. Robert Avella was announced as the new President of the Grace of God denomination. The charge was given for all to awaken from their slumber and make the Grace of God denomination the shadow of a great leader!

No one in the audience would disagree with the impact of Dr. Avella’s ministry. But one person was overheard to say, “If Fishers of Men Ministry is his shadow, then the Grace of God denomination is in trouble.”

A cruel assessment?

Looking Back

Few would say that “Robert” – as everyone had called him in 1990 – was the same person who was on the platform in 2010. Mary and Sergio, the only two members of the original Fishers of Men Ministry team, left the celebration and talked about how Robert and FMM had changed.

The first years of FMM were exciting. At the time, Robert was 45 years old. He had grown up with a father who ruled with an iron hand. Because Robert was adventurous, he often was harshly punished as a child. In fact, he could never forget his father’s most often used words: “You fool, can’t you do anything right?” Robert was also ridiculed by others when he was growing up because of his intelligence. He can still remember times of great loneliness and rejection. When he became an adult, he was driven to make a difference. When the opportunity came, he started FMM. Even though he now enjoyed a great deal of success, there always was a nagging sense of self-doubt and insecurity.
Early on Robert was a team player and inspired others with his vision and encouragement. Churches welcomed FFM’s evangelism training, which proved ideal for those who were eager to reach their friends for Christ.

As FMM grew under Robert’s leadership, he was invited to travel and teach and, in the process, became a sought-after conference speaker. It wasn’t long, however, before the early signs of “big boss sickness” began to appear. At first, no one seemed to notice. There was no objection when Robert took a large office. After all, this is common among church leaders in Alcatia, as is the privilege of a car and driver. Mary and Sergio could not help remembering, however, that Robert had previously lived a humble and simple life.

Also, no one seemed to think it strange when Robert spent less time with the FMM team. As pressure on his time increased, the spontaneous prayer times gave way to weekly chapel sessions always led by the Director, who by now was always addressed as “Dr. Avella”.

The difficulty of seeing Dr. Avella, without scheduling an appointment, should have been a danger sign. In fact, a policy was put in place restricting access to Dr. Avella.

As Mary and Sergio discussed the past, they agreed that they should have been more forthright with Dr. Avella who seemed to change after the embezzlement took place. Looking back they could now see that he lost all sense of trust in others and willingness to delegate. He instituted a policy insisting that he approve all ministry and financial decisions. This action resulted in many delays and many lost ministry opportunities. Instead of encouraging new ideas and initiatives, Dr. Avella no longer tolerated deviation from his directives. Those offering a differing opinion – both staff and board members – suffered in many ways, ranging from loss of face to being fired.

Morale began to decay in all departments at FFM. Promising younger workers left as quickly as possible hoping to find an atmosphere that offered more acceptance and support. It was then that Mary and Sergio realized that their original sense of community with their friend and brother probably was lost.

Mary and Sergio were forced to conclude that Dr. Robert Avella had fallen guilty to misusing the power of his office. It had become a means for self-fulfillment and advancement. Both agreed that fellow Christians, including the two of them, did not help this struggling man of God as he was distracted from Christ-centered leadership and received more and more expressions of worldly honor.

* This case study is fictional.
Session 5 – Discussion of the Case Study

Before viewing Session 5, please answer the three discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you describe Robert Avella’s early leadership?

2. How would you describe his later leadership?

3. What explanations can you give for some of Robert’s actions as a leader?

Watch the video (11:26).

Additional Resources:


Before watching Session 6, watch the clip from One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.
Watch the video (17:51).

Misuse of power is epidemic.

Church leaders are unaware when they misuse power.

The solution: Leaders must give access to others who can/will tell them the truth.

Reflection Questions

1. Do you think misuse of power is greater today than at other times? Is it more a problem within the evangelical world? Does putting our leaders on a pedestal lead to this problem? How have we done that?

2. Assuming that power and control can be destructive, what tendencies might cause you to misuse power or to seek unhealthy control?
Session 7 – Leading with a Towel

Watch the video (24:19)

John 13:1-17 (NIV84)

1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

7 Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

Background to the passage

Three Principles

1. He led out of a secure sense of self.

2. He met the needs of those he led.

3. He summoned us to pay it forward.

Washing the feet of the people I lead means ...
Tension created by the self-emptying love of Jesus

Leadership that fulfills the highest priority of those who we lead.

Test of Christ-centered Leadership

Example of Mother Teresa

**Additional Resources:**

*Something Beautiful for God: Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, Malcolm Muggeridge, HarperOne, 1986

**Reflection Questions**

1. What does it mean that our neighbor is “now the appointed agent authorized to receive” our service? What are some practical ways the we can “pay it forward” to our neighbors? To our family? To our enemies?

2. What are some ways to create a safe environment for those we are leading to risk and sometimes to fail? How do we create an atmosphere where people are free to tell us the truth?

3. Are those you lead growing as people? Are they becoming more like Christ? Are they becoming Christ-centered leaders? What things must change in the way you lead so that you become more like Christ in “leading with a towel”?

4. How do we let the King wash our feet again? What areas of our life and our leadership do we need to submit to his cleansing?

*Our goal: Leadership that fulfills the highest priority of those we lead.*
Session 8 – Culture: Products & Practices

Watch the Video (20:02)

Components of Organizational Culture – What is culture?

What comes to mind when you think of the word culture?

What is positive about culture?

What is negative about culture?

Products and Practices

Product - public, value add into the environment, external

Practice - ways we behave within the culture, written and unwritten; things that can be seen by an outsider
After the Video – Reflections Questions

1. What have been some positive aspects of culture from your personal experience? What have been some negative aspects? How have you seen your culture as exclusive or resistant to change?

2. What are some of the distinctive products and practices in your church culture? What things might a newcomer to your church notice that a long-time member might not?

The longer we are in a culture, the more things go unnoticed.
Session 9 – Culture: Values

Watch the video (18:13).

Values = core beliefs

Not the stated values, the actual values – those beliefs that pervade every aspect of our community and collective life.

Healthy values vs. unhealthy ones

Gap between stated and actual values

Assumptions = worldview

Mental constructs, pictures, images, defines for us what we perceive as real

Often don’t think about our assumptions

Assumptions determine values and values determine products and practices.

To change culture, most of the time we change products and practices.
After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. What are the values of your church culture? What values would you like to reinforce? What values would you like to remove?

2. Select a product or practice of your church culture and identify the values that are driving that product/practice. And what are the assumptions that determine those values?

3. How would you change the culture in your church to have products and practices, values, and assumptions that were more Christ-centered?

When the pressure is on we revert back to our old products and practices.
Watch the video (23:26).

Metaphors for the Church

Football team? What would that communicate? What would you value?

Symphony? Jazz Band?

Machine Metaphor

No inherent life

Productivity is the goal

Dominant metaphor of the 20th century, adopted by the church

Garden Metaphor

About cultivation and not production

Inherent life, bias toward survival

God gives the increase
After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. What is the dominant metaphor for your church? What does this communicate? What does it show about what your church values?

2. How do we transition from a machine metaphor to a church metaphor in the church? How do we go from a production mentality to a cultivation mentality?

3. How should the fact that God gives the increase affect how we do ministry? What does ministry look like when cultivation becomes central?

Additional Resources:

_You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church ... and Rethinking Faith_, David Kinnaman, Baker Books, 2011

The next generation is resisting the machine metaphor. They want to be valued as people.
Watch the video (17:01).

Key idea
The role of the leader in the machine model is about production, in the garden model it’s about cultivation and God produces.

Six assumptions of the machine approach vs. the garden approach

How we view people is what we believe about them and that affects how we treat them.

How we treat them is how they tend to act.

Continuum between the two sides

Jesus taught ...

- that effective leadership has more to do with learning to follow Him than learning to command or supervise.
- that effective leadership depends more on right attitudes than on mastery of certain skills.

After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. What do you think about these two statements?

2. How would the church be different if our leaders embraced the two principles that Jesus taught?
Watch the video (6:59).

**After the Video – Reflection Questions**

1. How did your list compare to those mentioned in the video? Did you agree with all of the examples that were given? Was anything mentioned that stood out to you?

2. What would be the biggest challenge in trying to implement these two principles in the life of your church? Do you believe people would be attracted to this style of leadership?
Watch the video (21:10).

Christ-centered Leadership:
What is it? What does it look like? What is the focus?

1. No leadership without relationship.

2. Influence vs. position

3. Potential vs. productivity

4. Common purpose vs. leader’s agenda

After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. What are some examples of people trying to lead without being in a relationship with those they lead? How did Jesus model building relationships in his ministry?

2. If you are not in a place of positional power how do you lead others? How did Jesus use influence in his ministry?

3. What are some ways to keep focused on follower potential when productivity is so important in our culture? What risks are involved in focusing on follower potential?

4. How do you determine what the common purpose should be? How does a pastor express his vision for a church without being committed to his own agenda?

Watch the video (14:08).

Luke 5:1-11 (NIV84)

1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, 2 he saw at the water’s edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.”

5 Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” 9 For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, 10 and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men.” 11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

1. Leaders understand what people needs. They discover those needs through relating to them.

2. Leaders see the potential in others and enable them to see the possibilities within themselves.

3. Effective leaders seldom command, they most often inspire.

4. People sacrifice when they are willing to embrace the purposes of God.
After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. Try to put yourself in the place of Simon Peter – how would you have reacted to Jesus’ request to put down the nets again? What would you do after seeing the great catch? What would leaving everything look like to you?

2. How are we able to see the potential in those that we are leading? How do we keep from placing our own expectations on others? How can we help others see their own potential?

3. How do we move from commanding others to inspiring others? What strikes you about this approach to leadership?

4. Have you seen examples of people willing to sacrifice when they embrace God’s purpose for their life? What sacrifices is God calling you to make for him?

Ordinary people make great disciples.
Watch the video (26:19).

Primary Handles for Developing a Healthy Church Culture (part I)

1. What our leaders model and teach

2. How we allocate our scarce resources

3. Behaviors we reward and penalize

After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. What qualities do you desire most in a leader? How can you tell when a leader is honest? Is it more important to model or teach? Is one more important than the other?

2. What would be the resource priorities in your context? What is your church communicating by how it deals with resources? What would you change in how you allocate resources?

3. How do we reward behaviors in the church? What does this say about what we value?

Additional Resources

Watch the video (25:46).

Primary Handles for Developing a Healthy Church Culture (part II)

4. What we measure

5. How our leaders respond to crisis

After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. What does your church/organization currently measure? What does that say about what you value?

2. What are you comfortable measuring? How would you go about measuring something like integrity? How do we keep objective evaluation from becoming subjective?

3. How can you prepare for crisis situations? What can we find out about leaders by watching how they respond to crisis?
Session 17 – The Example of Jesus

Watch the video (22:06).

How did Jesus deal with these handles?

1. What our leaders model & teach

   Garasene demoniac (Luke 8:26-39)

   Clearing the temple (Mark 11:12-19)

2. How we allocate scarce resources

   Jesus anointed with perfume (Luke 7:36-50)

3. Behaviors we reward

   Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-10)

   Wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24-29)
4. What we measure

Parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-23)

Parable of the mina (Luke 19:11-27)

5. How our leaders respond to crisis

Jesus pursued to be king (John 6:25-71)

Woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11)

After the Video – Reflection Questions

1. Work back through these five handles and think about other biblical examples about how Jesus or other leaders from Scripture dealt with these handles.

2. Reflect on your own life and ministry in each of these five areas. What does it say about your leadership or your church by your personal inventory in these five areas? What are you doing well? Where can you improve?
Watch the video (6:21) and work through the next several pages with your church or organization, if possible.

### Current Values Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Current (actual) Values</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do our leaders model and teach?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do we allocate resources?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What behavior(s) do we reward?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do we measure?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How do our leaders respond to crisis?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our current values are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Our desired values are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
### Desired Values Strategy Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handles</th>
<th>V1</th>
<th>V2</th>
<th>V3</th>
<th>V4</th>
<th>V5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What will our leaders model and teach?</td>
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<td>How will we allocate our scarce resources?</td>
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<td>What will we measure?</td>
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FINAL EXAM

After you have successfully completed the quizzes for Sessions 1-17, you may take the Final Exam, which is connected to Session 18.

You must answer 80% of the 20 questions correctly to receive a passing score and complete this course.

After you have successfully completed Course One: Leading a Healthy Church Culture, you may proceed to Course Two: Leading Teams with Care.