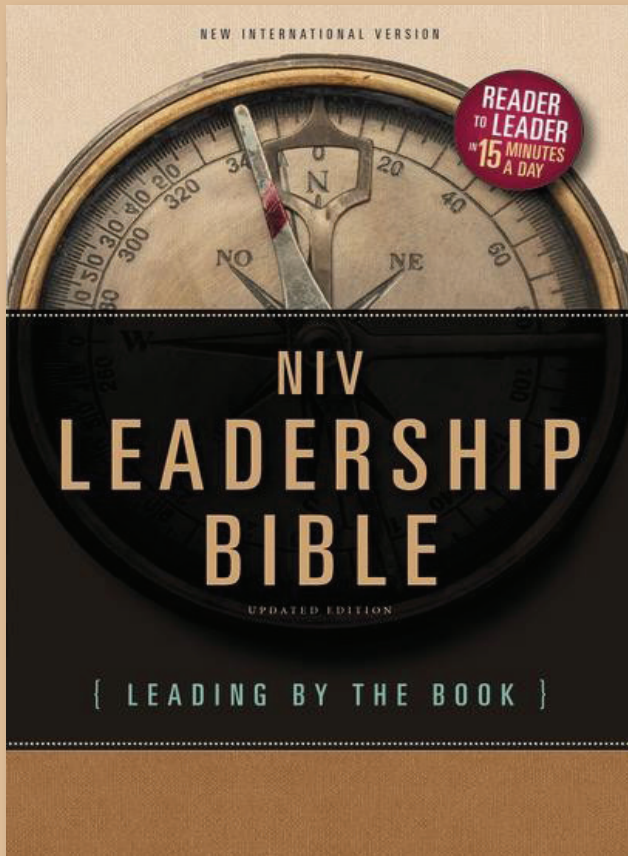




# LEADERSHIP PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

## 7-Day Plan



# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DEVOTIONAL

Learn from both ancient and contemporary experts in leadership! This 7-day devotional plan draws from the “Personal Development” track in the NIV Leadership Bible. Each day’s reading focuses on an aspect of leadership development illuminated by its foundation in God’s Word.

- DAY 1:** Humility
- DAY 2:** Self-Discipline
- DAY 3:** Dependence on God
- DAY 4:** Commitment
- DAY 5:** Values
- DAY 6:** Vision
- DAY 7:** Priorities

# Day 1

*Humility is the fear of the LORD;  
its wages are riches and honor and life.*

**Proverbs 22:4**

## HUMILITY

Perks and privileges usually accompany successful leadership. Many leaders enjoy being in charge, making decisions that affect the organization, delegating implementation of those decisions to others, occupying a corner office, “running the show,” having others defer to them in meetings, and the like. As one gets ahead, it’s hard not to get a big head.

As a leader, King Solomon enjoyed all these perks and much more. Like few leaders before or since, he had wealth, power, wisdom and plenty of servants. Other rulers traveled long distances to listen to his wisdom, and other entrepreneurs came to marvel at his wealth. Yet from this lofty position Solomon cautioned, “humility is the fear of the LORD; its wages are riches and honor and life.”

Wages accompany a job well done. If a leader is effective, they will be compensated with wages in the form of money or other perks. But a person who is humble gains greater wages. Which will you choose?



# Day 2

*For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid,  
but gives us power, love and self-discipline.*

**2 Timothy 1:7**

## SELF-DISCIPLINE

Because of Timothy's natural inclination to timidity, Paul was prompted to encourage his fellow worker to maintain a holy boldness and assurance in his position of spiritual leadership. Paul had commissioned Timothy to oversee many of the churches in the Roman province of Asia, and this task required "power, love and self-discipline." Self-discipline is needed to stretch us beyond our own comfort zones and areas of personal inertia. For some, the needed discipline will be more in the realm of the emotions; for others the focus of self-control will be in the realm of the mind or of the will.

Writing to the Galatians, Paul said that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"

(Galatians 5:22-23). While people without Christ can exercise self-control, this quality in its fullest expression of character transformation is a part of the spiritual fruit that only the Holy Spirit can produce.

Self-discipline is seldom easy. Paul's words to Timothy reveal that this young man probably struggled with it in his ministry. And most leaders who come across the need for more self-discipline in their lives struggle at times as well. But read Paul's instruction to Timothy again in this passage, and let it sink in and empower you in the areas in which you most need help. God's Spirit is the power source behind self-discipline. Timothy evidently found that out, and so can you.

# Day 3

*This is what the LORD says:*

*“Cursed is the one who trusts in man,  
who draws strength from mere flesh  
and whose heart turns away from the LORD.  
That person will be like a bush in the wastelands;  
they will not see prosperity when it comes.*

*They will dwell in the parched places of the desert,  
in a salt land where no one lives.*

*“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,  
whose confidence is in him.*

*They will be like a tree planted by the water  
that sends out its roots by the stream.*

*It does not fear when heat comes;  
its leaves are always green.*

*It has no worries in a year of drought  
and never fails to bear fruit.”*

**Jeremiah 17:5-8**

## DEPENDENCE ON GOD

Jeremiah draws a sharp contrast between those who depend on human strength and those who depend on the living God. He makes it clear that we cannot look to both as our supreme basis of trust; we will either put our hope in the promises and power of people, or we will look beyond human capability to the person and promises of God. When we make people the basis of our confidence, we experience rejection and disappointment again and again. But when God becomes the ultimate source of our confidence, we are never let down.

Habakkuk learned that “the righteous person will live by his faithfulness” (Habakkuk 2:4), and he was not talking about faith in others. “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe” (Proverbs 29:25). Those who put more confidence in themselves or in other people than in God will find bitterness and disappointment in the end. They may appear to prosper for a season, but the journey will not get them to their desired goals. But those who transfer their trust from themselves or the promises of others to the Lord discover that their lives are deeply rooted in well-watered soil. The Lord declares that “Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained” (1 Samuel 2:30).

In what areas of your life (e.g., business, finances, health, family) are you depending more on yourself and others than on God?

# Day 4

*Though the fig tree does not bud  
and there are no grapes on the vines,  
though the olive crop fails  
and the fields produce no food,  
though there are no sheep in the pen  
and no cattle in the stalls,  
yet I will rejoice in the LORD,  
I will be joyful in God my Savior.*

**Habakkuk 3:17-18**

## COMMITMENT

What a refreshing statement! Many leaders would love to have followers who are this committed to the cause. In fact, many leaders would love to have this level of commitment to their own cause. The key ingredient to Habakkuk's statement is that it is unidirectional; he promised to maintain his attitude regardless of the payback.

That's really what "commitment" is. The statement, "I will be committed if" isn't commitment-making; it's deal-making. It's not committing; it's bargaining. In Habakkuk chapter 2 God explained his justice and his majesty to the prophet. Habakkuk 3:17-18 is he prophet's response to that revelation of God's character.

In the absence of a life-consuming ideal, asking for the level of commitment Habakkuk expressed is absurd. Leaders must identify what it is within their organization that is genuinely worthy of commitment. Until leaders complete this definition, they sound rather shallow even talking about it. No sane person will commit to things that don't really matter. But when an organization's goals and outcomes are properly related to the living God, and its activities honor him, then commitment makes sense. Instead of asking, "How do we get commitment?" effective leaders will begin by asking, "To what (or whom) are we committed?"

# Day 5

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

**Matthew 6:19-21**

## VALUES

The first step in effective leadership is defining core values. Until that is done, the ship the leader is trying to steer has no rudder. Vision, mission, strategy and outcomes are difficult—if not impossible—to define until values are clear. Jesus knew that; early in the process of developing his team of disciples, he forced them to confront this foundational issue.

Matthew records Jesus’ primer on values in Matthew 6:1–34. Jesus focused his lesson in verses 19–21: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth ... but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (vv. 19–20). Your heart (focus, attention, affection, resources) will center on your treasure (what you supremely value; v. 21).

Jesus urged his disciples to focus their values on things that would bear an eternal return. But how, while making

a living on earth, while responsibly leading an enterprise on earth, while providing jobs, product, service and profit on earth, do we build treasure in heaven?

This passage presents the crux of the value question. Read 6:1. Got the idea? Who do you work for? Whose nod of approval matters most? Who defines what really matters?

Jesus told his disciples that the core value, the driving value, the eternal value is this: “Does what I am doing please God?” Every other value is second to that one. When that value is in place all other values line up. Matthew 6 is among the most definitive chapters in the Bible for shaping a leader’s philosophy of life and leadership. Spend some time here. Doing so will have inestimable value.

# Day 6

*He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.*

*But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”*

**Mark 8:31-33**

## VISION

Jesus consistently cast an energizing vision of God’s coming kingdom. His vision was so compelling that his disciples left everything to follow him. In this passage, Jesus tells the disciples that his vision would demand his own total commitment to it. His description was so graphic that Peter rebuked him. But Jesus knew he had to risk his disciples’ rejection of the vision by telling them what it would cost to achieve it. Any leader who paints the goal without painting the path to that goal is in danger of failing to realize the vision.

John Ryan, president of Center for Creative Leadership, writes, “leadership success always starts with vision.” He then adds, “Compelling visions can change the world. But staying invested in them can be extremely difficult when hard times arrive.”

Great leaders, says Ryan, cast visions that “can be—and in fact should be—challenging to put into action. They realize them only by setting realistic, demanding goals and then going after them relentlessly.” And then he adds this key statement, “Indeed, when it comes to living out a vision, persistence matters just as much as inspiration.”\*

Jesus painted a compelling vision, but he never pulled any punches when warning his followers that there would be prices to pay. Leaders owe followers an honest and complete picture when they paint a glorious future. To promote the prize and hide the price is not only unfair; it is a strong invitation for people to jump ship in the first storm.

\*Ryan, “Leadership Success Always Starts With Vision.”



# Day 7

*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

**Philippians 3:12-14**

## PRIORITIES

Paul accomplished an amazing amount in the approximately 20 years he functioned as a leader. The churches he planted and the letters he wrote have helped shape Western culture. Part of Paul's ability to accomplish so much is defined in Philippians 3:13: "But one thing I do ..."

The book of Acts and Paul's epistles reveal that he lived a real life in real circumstances with real options to choose from. He, like everyone else, had to decide what to do and what not to do. He obviously made wise choices. He pursued matters that mattered. When options conflicted, he had the ability to choose well. But priorities have to begin with a "But one thing I do." Without a defining, central Priority, there can be no sensible priorities in leading or in life.

Life is too complex to live it by lists of priorities. Paul knew what one thing gave definition to his life, and all his priorities grew out of that central focus. Priorities help us say yes and no to things that matter and don't matter. Far more, having a consuming priority redefines how we say yes and how we live to make that yes a reality.

