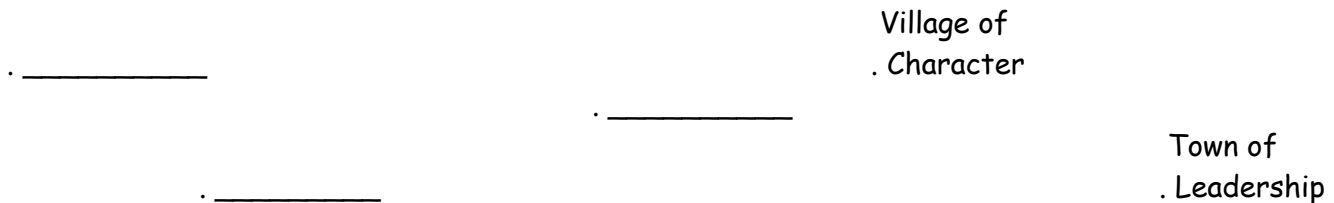


Rooting Leadership in Character
Dr. Rod Wilson; www.regent-college.edu

Important Questions

- What is personality?
- What is character?
- Is leadership a goal or an outcome?
- Is Christian leadership a by-product of character?
- Is godly character different than the character shown in those who do not know God?



- What are the pre-requisites of character?

Monitoring Your Passion and Direction

- Information
 - Understanding
 - Skill
1. Anxiety- will I make it? am I doing alright?
 2. Arrogance- I have mastered this area but there is pressure to keep it up
 3. Imitation- look for people to follow as a shortcut

Fear, mastery and laziness all get in the way of character development

Role, First Name and Family of Origin

-President... Rod... Wilson... = ?

Being a Christian Leader

a. Knowledge of Self and God

There is no deep knowing of God without a deep knowing of the self and no deep knowing of self without a deep knowing of God...True and substantial wisdom consists principally of two parts: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves...The knowledge of ourselves, therefore, is not an incitement to seek after God, but likewise a considerable assistance in finding him." John Calvin. *Institutes of Christian Religion*.

b. Understanding the Spiritual Journey in Leadership (adapted from Thomas Keating. *Invitation to Love: The Way of Christian Contemplation*. New York: Continuum, 2003)

- love of Christ is core to our spiritual essence both in who we are and how we express ourselves
- spiritual life's ascent trajectory- deeper sense of Christ's love for us
- also a descent trajectory- always in tension with inner values and ideas
- biography and theology are always in dialogue
- core to the biography is our 'emotional programs for happiness'
- brokenness of all of our histories means our inner needs are not met completely or properly
- I don't feel secure/loved/in control > emotional program for happiness
- we only find out what our programs might be when the afflictive emotions come to the surface
- when things seems harmful, dangerous or rejecting we begin to feel deeply
- typically anger, grief, fear, pride, greed, envy, lust, and apathy
- through community and contemplative prayer listen to your emotional program for happiness
- ironically it will drive you to God

c. Grace, Performance and Acceptance: Getting the Chronology Right

- grace = perform because you are accepted
- emotional bondage = perform in order to be accepted

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them- yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. (I Cor. 15:9-10)

- being rooted in relationship with God and his family > identity precedes performance
- being rooted in relationship with an unhealthy family and culture tainted by sin > need to compensate for fragile/bruised identity by performing
- deficits in identity will lead to compensatory behaviour in performance

When Outcome Becomes a Goal

Rooting Leadership in Competence

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Sociology of Professions

1. trait approach

-a profession is defined by a common body of knowledge and skills

2. power approach

-profession as an assertion of power, social advantage and earning capacity

3. functionalist approach

-family/community lost so we rely on professionals to do what we cannot do for ourselves

Experiential Struggles with Competence

a. I don't want to have limitations...

...limitations and liabilities are the flip side of our gifts...a particular weakness is the inevitable trade-off for a particular strength. We will become better...not by trying to fill the potholes in our souls but by knowing them so well that we can avoid falling into them. (Palmer, P. *Let Your Life Speak*. 52)

b. I don't want to suffer...

...[with apologies for the lack of inclusive language] our fragmented life experiences combined with our sense of urgency do not allow for a "handbook for ministers [leaders]"...After all attempts to articulate the predicament of modern man, the necessity to articulate the predicament of the minister [leader] himself became most important. For the minister [leader] is called to recognize the sufferings of his time in his own heart and make that recognition the starting point of his service. Whether he tries to enter into a dislocated world, relate to a convulsive generation, or speak to a dying man, his service will not be perceived as authentic unless it comes from a heart wounded by the suffering about which he speaks. (Nouwen, H. *Wounded Healer*, New York:Image Books, xvi)

c. I don't want to be vulnerable...

The greater strength we have in some area of human excellence-intellect, beauty, physical strength- the harder it is to embrace the reality of our vulnerability, which is a condition of being human.

(Maxine Hancock, *To Be Fully Human*. *Crux*, December 2000 Vol. 36, 37)

d. I don't want to feel weak...

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (II Cor. 12:9-10)

e. I don't want to show my true self...

Thomas Merton claimed that "there is in all things...a hidden wholeness." But back in the human world—where we are less self-revealing than jack pines—Merton's words can, at times, sound like wishful thinking. Afraid that our inner life will be extinguished or our inner darkness exposed, we hide our true identities from each other. In the process, we become separated from our own souls. We end up living divided lives, so far removed from the truth we hold within that we cannot know the "integrity that comes from being what you are"...Wholeness does not mean perfection: it means embracing brokenness as an integral part of life. Knowing this gives me hope that human wholeness—mine, yours, ours—need not be a utopian dream, if we can use devastation as a seedbed for new life. (Palmer, P. *A Hidden Wholeness*. 4-5)

Being a Professional of a Certain Kind

Ministers [Educators] run the awful risk, in other words, of ceasing to be witnesses to the presence in their own lives—let alone in the lives of the people they are trying to minister to—of a living God who transcends everything they think they know and can say about him and is full of extraordinary surprises. Instead they tend to become *professionals* who have mastered all the techniques of institutional religion and who speak on religious matters with what often seems a maximum of authority and a minimum of vital personal involvement. Their sermons often sound as bland as they sound bloodless. The faith they proclaim appears to be no longer rooted in our nourished by or challenged by their own lives but instead free-floating, secondhand, passionless...Obviously ministers [leaders] are not called to be in that sense professionals. God forbid. I believe that they are called instead, together with all other Christians and would-be Christians, to consider the lilies of the field, to consider the least of these my brethren [sic], to consider the dead sparrow by the roadside. Maybe prerequisite to all those, they are called upon to consider themselves—what they love and what they fear, what they are ashamed of, what makes them sick to their stomachs, what rejoices their hearts. (Buechner, F. *Telling Secrets: A Memoir*. 37-38)

As professionals, we like to define ourselves in ways that stress competence, high standards, an ethic of service, personal sacrifice, and so on. A professional is a person who has invested long hours and much money to develop an allegedly rare ability that others can be convinced to need and to purchase at a high price...In fact, the full-fledged professional has the power and sometimes the necessity to extend the world of objects even further, to make objects of other people...At root, a professional is one who makes a profession of faith—faith in something larger and wiser than his or her own powers...The true professional is a person whose action points beyond his or her self to that underlying reality, that hidden wholeness, on which we all can rely. (Parker Palmer. *The Active Life*. 41, 42, 44)

...the outstanding lawyer—the one who serves as a model for the rest—is not simply an accomplished technician but a person of prudence or practical wisdom as well. It is of course rewarding to become technically proficient in the law. But earlier generations of American lawyers conceived their highest goal to be the attainment of a wisdom that lies beyond technique—a wisdom about human beings and their tangled affairs that anyone who wishes to provide real deliberative counsel must possess. They understood this wisdom to be a trait of character that one acquires only by becoming a person of good judgment, and not just an expert in the law...When we attribute good judgment to a person, we imply more than that he has broad knowledge and a quick intelligence. We mean also to suggest that he shows a certain calmness in his deliberations, together with a balance sympathy toward the various concerns of which his situation (or the situation of his client) requires that he take account. These are qualities as much of feeling as of thought. (Anthony T. Kronman. *The Lost Lawyer: Failing Ideals of the Legal Profession*. 2, 16)

Doing It For Love or Money?

-bring back the amateurs!