

The **ENTRUSTED Leader's Workbook**
***“Barnabas”* Edition**

Seven Core Values that Impact Every Leader-to-Follower Relationship:
HEART-MISSION-APPROACH-STABILITY-LIFESTYLE-FORTITUDE-WORLDVIEW

Lesson Twenty Two: A Foundation for Leadership

By
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Lesson Twenty Two: A Foundation for Leadership

CORE VALUE: A WORLDVIEW founded on absolute truth and the words of Jesus Christ.

BIBLE VERSE(S): Luke 6:46-49

ONE SIMPLE TRUTH: The words of Jesus Christ provide reliable material for a Biblical worldview and a strong foundation for leadership.

APPLICATION: Put the words of Jesus into practice everywhere you lead others.

Introduction:

A person's worldview provides the raw material from which one constructs a "FOUNDATION" for leadership. A secular/human worldview supplies unreliable materials. A Biblical worldview supplies reliable materials. A person's view of the world determines what materials he or she will have at his or her disposal for constructing the foundation upon which one's framework for leading will rest. Only the words of Jesus Christ provide reliable material for a Biblical worldview and a sure foundation for leadership.

A sturdy building rests on a foundation of reliable materials (concrete and steel) attached to bedrock. The foundation must be well constructed and attached to bedrock so that shifting soil, rain, and wind won't cause the framing or outer skin to crack or become un-level. A solid base protects a building from outside pressures that seek to compromise integrity of the structure. Bedrock naturally exists as part of creation. The key to constructing a sure foundation involves using reliable materials and digging deep enough

to attach one's substructure to the un-moveable footing of bedrock. The same can be said of constructing a sure foundation for leadership.

For the leader, God's Word provides an un-moveable footing of bedrock and a reliable resource of materials for the construction of a sure foundation. David said of God's Word: "All your commands are trustworthy..." and "Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens." (Psalm 119:86 & 89 NIV) A leader can confidently attach his or her foundation for leading to God's Word because scripture stands eternal, firm, and trustworthy.

Furthermore, God's Word contains an unlimited resource of reliable materials from which a leader can confidently construct a foundation for leadership. David also said of God's Word: "Open my eyes that I see wonderful things in your law" and "Turn my eyes from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word." (Psalm 119:18 & 37 NIV) The person who opens his or her eyes to the storehouse of God's Word will truly find wonderful building blocks from which to construct a foundation. A foundation for leading built using God's Word serves to protect a leader from outside pressures that seek to compromise his or her structural integrity.

In Luke 6:46-49, Jesus taught his followers the importance of constructing a solid foundation for one's life and attaching it to bedrock. The Lord communicated this lesson in the form of a parable entitled: *The Wise and Foolish Builders*.

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete." (NIV)

Questions of the Biblical Text¹ (Luke 6:46-49)

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

What hypocrisy do you see in calling Jesus “Lord, Lord” and not applying his words?
What evidence might one expect to see in the life of a leader who does what Jesus says?

*⁴⁷ I will show you what he is like who
comes to me and
hears my words and
puts them into practice.*

*⁴⁸ He is like a man
building a house, who
dug down deep and
laid the foundation on rock.*

*When a flood came,
the torrent struck that house but
could not shake it,
because it was well built.*

As a leader, relate in your own words the discipline you must exercise in your life in order to put Jesus’ words into practice in such a way that they protect you from destructive forces you might encounter as a leader?

¹ Unless otherwise noted the questions listed in *The ENTRUSTED Leader’s Workbook* are based on: *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, c1984)

*⁴⁹ But the one who
hears my words and
does not put them into practice*

*is like a man who
built a house
on the ground
without a foundation.*

*The moment
the torrent struck that house,
it collapsed and
its destruction was complete.”*

Relate in your own words the potential risks of collapse associated with hearing but not practicing Jesus' words in the midst of destructive forces swirling around you.

What destructive forces and temptations can you think of that have the potential to cause a catastrophic collapse of a person's effectiveness as a leader? How does a well built foundation constructed from God's Word keep a leader unshaken when struck by the torrent of pressures associated with leading others?

The Entrusted Leader: 7 Core Values

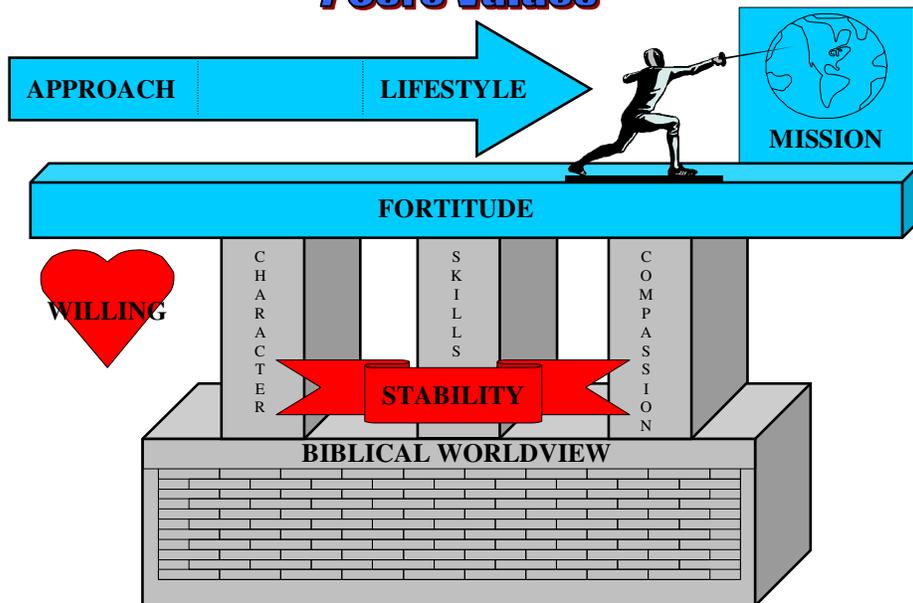
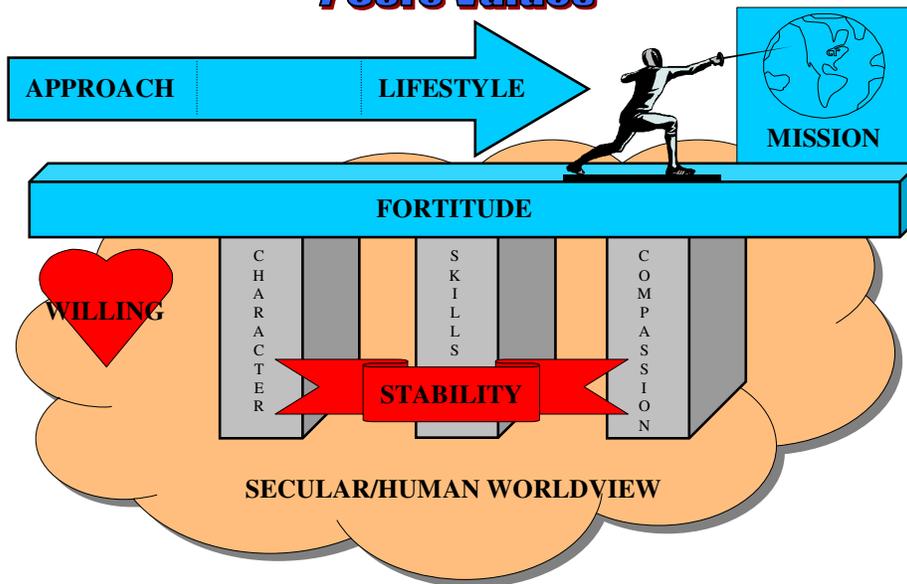


Figure 1: The ENTRUSTED Leader

An Entrusted Leader resembles the wise builder spoken of by Jesus in this parable. This leader laid a foundation for leading others constructed from God’s Word. All the core values of an ENTRUSTED Leader are anchored to and rest securely on the foundation of a Biblical worldview. This foundation and framework for leading cannot be shaken by the storms of life that are sure to come every leader’s way at some time. Inside the Entrusted Leader beats a heart willing to do all God asks. This leader finds inspiration in a calling to God’s eternal mission that supersedes one’s own temporal goals. He or she voluntarily denies self in order to approach leading as a servant. The marketplace respects a lifestyle beyond reproach that extends faith, hope, and love to all. A proper balance of skills, character, and compassion provide added stability for the Entrusted Leader. Faith in the love and sovereignty of God bolster this leader with the fortitude to lead others in the face of great adversity. Practicing God’s Word makes all this possible for a leader.

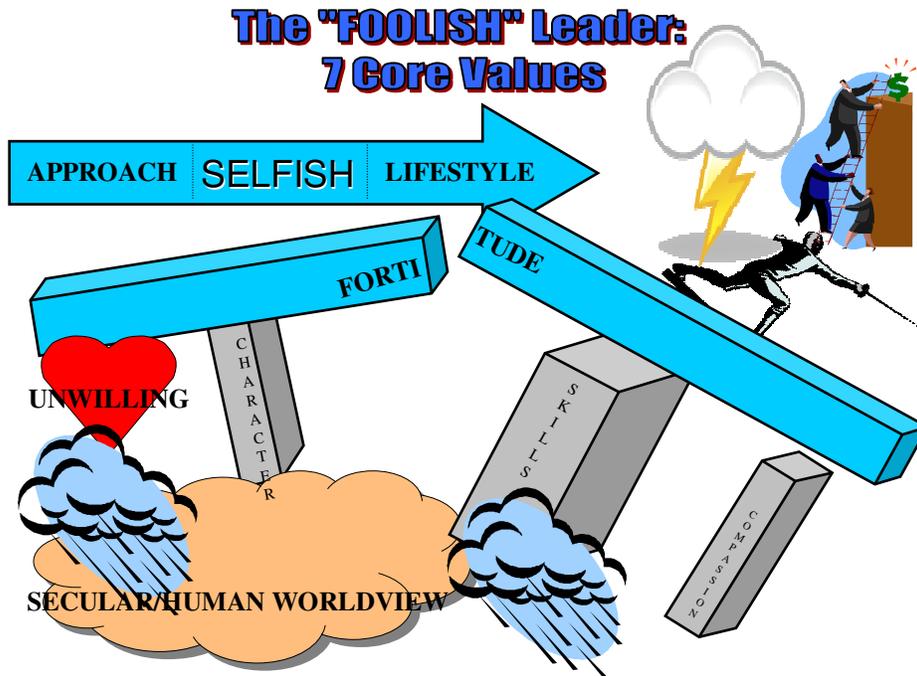
The "FOOLISH" Leader: 7 Core Values



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Figure 2: The "FOOLISH" Leader

The FOOLISH Leader resembles the foolish builder spoken of by Jesus in this parable. This leader laid no foundation for leading. Secular and human philosophies shape this leader’s view of the world and provide the basis for his or her core values. Initially, the fools’ visible framework of leadership may resemble that of a wise leader. The core values of a “Foolish” Leader, however, are anchored to nothing. This leadership framework will be shaken by the storms of life. Inside the Foolish Leader beats a heart un-willing to do all God asks. A mission to satisfy one’s earthly desire to climb a ladder to fame, fortune, and power drives this leader. He or she actively promotes self in order to approach leading as an authority. The marketplace sees the hypocrisy of a lifestyle that speaks one way but acts another. Stability evaporates because of an over-reliance on skills and underdeveloped character and compassion. Faith in self alone leaves this leader paralyzed with fear and doubt when facing great adversity. Not putting God’s Word into practice makes this leadership house-of-cards a reality in the life a foolish leader.



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Figure 3: The "FOOLISH" Leader when exposed to the storms of life.

The ground under the fool's leadership framework washes away when exposed to the storms of life. Because this leader laid no foundation for leading, his or her house-of-cards collapses, and the destruction is complete. When put to the test of leadership pressure, secular and human philosophies will melt away like sand on the banks of a flooding river. The fool's core values which were shaped by a secular/human view of the world will be exposed as something less than the outward image falsely propagated on an unsuspecting group of followers. When the pressure of leading gets intense enough, the heart un-willing to do all God asks will generate outward actions and attitudes contrary to God's will. A foolish leader's mission, approach to leading, lifestyle, over-reliance on skills at the expense of character and compassion, and lack of real faith in God will all be exposed as self-centered when the storms of leading blow. Once the collapse of the foolish leader becomes complete, the contrast to the ENTRUSTED Leader becomes visible to all.

Commentary:

Jesus' story of the wise and foolish builders takes the form of a parable. A parable contains an obvious simple story arranged to communicate a more subtle and deeper spiritual truth. Many hearers of a parable never think past the obvious story. The wise listener, however, reflects on the obvious to understand the deeper spiritual truth.

Luke places this parable within the context of Jesus describing for the twelve Apostles what characterizes a true follower of Christ. Read Luke 6:12-49 and you will find the following sequence of events that set this context of defining real discipleship.

- Jesus calls the twelve Apostles from the masses (Vs12-15).
- Jesus characterizes a true follower of Christ (Vs16-49).
 - Treat enemies with love and mercy (Vs27-36).
 - Extend forgiveness without judging/condemning others (Vs37-38).
 - Think truthfully about self and others, avoid hypocrisy (Vs 39-42).
 - Displays good fruit (Vs43-45).
 - Puts Jesus' words into practice (Vs 46-49).
- Examples of how real followers of Jesus live (Luke chapter seven).

The parable of the wise and foolish builders stands as a contrast between two men; one who puts Jesus' words into practice, and one who does not. On the outside, these two men look identical. The stature of the foolish man with no foundation may actually rise above ground first because the wise man takes time to dig deep and lay a solid substructure on rock before building. When trouble comes, however, the structural

difference becomes clear. The wise man weathers the storms of life unshaken while the foolish collapses and is swept away.

Jesus uses a rhetorical question to identify the subject of this parable: people who call him ‘Lord Lord’ but chose to ignore his words. To call someone Lord essentially involves a loud and public pronouncement that a person has chosen to voluntarily submit one’s will to another. The Greek term for “Lord” is *kurios*. Strong defines the term as follows: “...he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord...the possessor and disposer of a thing...the owner; one who has control of the person, the master.”² Claiming to follow Jesus as one’s “Lord” can only be viewed as a voluntary act. Jesus neither claimed nor sought to exercise authority over his followers. Jesus simply notes the hypocrisy of making such a vocal and voluntary statement of loyalty without a corresponding visual display of obedience. Jesus calls into question the sincerity of those who claim to be his followers but fail to obey what he says. To publicly pronounce Jesus as one’s master but not do what he says dishonors God and brings humiliation upon oneself. Jesus clarifies that obedience to and application of his words is required of his true followers. Does how you lead others in the marketplace reflect a commitment to put Jesus’ words into practice?

Jesus expects his followers to give more than lip-service to his teachings. Jesus expects believers to go beyond proclaiming publicly a relationship with him and to privately practice his words in all situations. Transformed lives provide evidence of

²James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996), G2962.

obedience to his words. True followers of Christ conform their will to God's will, and they sacrificially serve God's interests in the world rather than their own.

Instead of harshly criticizing these hypocritical disciples, Jesus warns foolish builders that they have hastily built a house of cards that will inevitably collapse under the pressures of life. Jesus makes his point by contrasting two men who both have heard Jesus speak, but only one listener puts Jesus' word into practice. Knowledge without obedience leads to pride, pseudo-spirituality, a Pharisee complex, a holier-than-thou attitude, and a false sense of security. Practically applying Jesus' words results in life transformation and a public life-style that glorifies God and brings stability in times of trouble.

The foolish builder laid no foundation. He immediately began constructing a house anchored to no substructure but the ground. This builder did not invest the time and energy required to lay a solid foundation. Surely, the outer shell looked stable, and construction proceeded quickly for all to see. When the floods came, however, this deception was exposed for all to see.

The wise builder performed three actions the foolish builder did not do. This man excavated the ground below his house's intended location. He dug deep to expose the natural bedrock of creation. The second step this man took involved building a solid foundation using reliable materials. Finally, he attached the solid foundation to the exposed bedrock. All this was done prior to construction of the houses framework, outer shell, and roof.

Constructing a foundation for leadership comprises actions similar to laying a building's foundation. Building a Biblical worldview to lead from requires: a process of

digging below the surface, constructing a foundation from reliable materials, and attaching the foundation to an un-moveable object. Developing a Biblical worldview requires the spade work of digging into God's Word with an open mind and obedient heart. You cannot view the world through the lens of the Bible if you don't take the time to routinely study the scriptures. One must, however, go beyond digging into God's Word and put what Jesus says into practice. The only sure foundation for leadership is constructed from the reliable material of applying God's Word to every facet of a leader's life. Lastly, God and His Word stand eternal, absolute, and fixed. Faith in God and a commitment to follow his word provide the un-moveable objects of heaven and earth to which one's foundation must be attached.

The best time to lay a solid foundation precedes the construction of the house. Repairing, shoring-up, or trying to lay a foundation after the fact constitutes a losing battle. Laying a foundation for a house must take place prior to constructing the framework. You cannot go back and lay a foundation when the torrent strikes and cracks begin to appear. Also, a correlation exists between the size and strength of a foundation and the size and height of the building. A large tall building requires a deep and sturdy foundation. The same correlation exists for leadership. The more lofty and difficult the leadership position a person holds, the deeper and stronger the person's foundation needs to be.

Listeners of God's Word glean another key insight of the parable of the wise and foolish builders from the torrent that struck both houses. The simple story pictures torrential rain which produces a flood of water. The resulting torrent erodes the ground

under the houses, causing the one without a foundation to collapse. We all have seen pictures of the destructive power of flooding waters.

Every leader will face pressures that will test the presence and strength of the foundation upon which one has erected his or her leadership framework. Every leader can count on having to face potentially destructive forces that the average follower will never understand. The wider one's span of responsibility grows, the greater the leadership pressures one will face. The leader with no real foundation for life will eventually crack under the pressure, and his or her destruction will be complete.

The crumbling of one's effectiveness as a leader may show up in a variety of ways. The ENTRUSTED Leader's Workbook is designed around Seven Core Values of an Entrusted Leader. One of the key motivations for this design stems from a conviction that many leaders who fail, falter because they give into the pressures of leading and compromise one or a combination of these core values. Observation of leaders who fail suggests that the compromising of one's core values results in a leader's demise more frequently than a deficiency of skills. A commitment to put Jesus' words into practice lays a foundation for leadership that protects a leader from the temptation to give into pressure and compromise his or her core values.

Application:

Write out a short plan of action for how you can better put God's Word into practice in your role as a leader and protect you from the pressure to compromise your core values.

(Insert additional pages if necessary)

Conclusion:

The words of Jesus Christ provide reliable material for a Biblical worldview and a sure foundation for leadership. Claiming to be a follower of Jesus Christ must be evidenced by a commitment to put the words of Jesus into practice everywhere you lead others. Building the framework of your leadership upon the foundation of God's Word (Biblical worldview) will protect you from the pressures of leading others that can potentially bring about your downfall.