

*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 Eight: The Platform of Leadership**

By  
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## **Lesson Eight: The Platform of Leadership**

**CORE VALUE:** A MISSION for leading characterized by a faithful commitment to multiplying followers of Jesus Christ that supersedes all other marketplace endeavors.

**BIBLE VERSE(S):** Romans 13:1

**ONE SIMPLE TRUTH:** Each position of leadership you hold provides a platform entrusted to you by God that contains multiple opportunities to impact others for the mission of Christ.

**APPLICATION:** Build a disciple making action plan for each platform of leadership you possess.

The Platform of Leadership completes the three lesson set designed to teach an Entrusted Leader core value number two: *A MISSION for leading characterized by a faithful commitment to multiplying followers of Jesus Christ that supersedes all other marketplace endeavors*. Jesus established the mission: Make disciples! Each follower of Jesus Christ stands called to participate in this mission. The Apostle Paul gave Timothy the strategy of multiplication for making disciples. This strategy of developing life-on-life relationships with reliable men and women who can teach others still works today. God intends and desires for this mission and strategy to rise above all other marketplace endeavors and become the preeminent priority in all your leadership opportunities. God has entrusted you with various platforms of leadership that provide opportunities for you to initiate the actions necessary to make this mission and strategy a reality where you lead others.

The ENTRUSTED Leader's Workbook defines a "Platform of Leadership" as follows: *The position a leader stands upon whereby others publicly recognize a leader's authority to lead.* The leader's position and authority make up the two key concepts of this definition. A leader's platform encompasses one's span of authority, sphere of influence, and realm of responsibility associated with his or her position of leadership. Keep in mind that God entrusted the influence and authority associated with your leadership platforms for his purposes not yours.

This may sound like an obvious question, but I want you to ask yourself: How does a person acquire a Leadership Platform? Your answer to this question will dramatically impact how you lead others. Three possible answers exist to this question. A leader typically ascribes the origin of his or her Leadership Platform to: Self, another person, or God.

Heroic stories of success have popularized the myth of "The Self-made Leader" in western culture. Many leaders arrogantly ascribe all the credit for getting to the top to self. Years of hard work and sacrifice leave many leaders deceived into believing that they accomplished success without help from others. When asked about the origin of one's platform or authority to lead, down deep in their hearts these leaders believe in: Self! This view of leadership platform origin inevitably produces a self-centered leader. This egocentric leader believes he or she answers to no one but self and will lead others according to his or her own personal agenda and to satisfy one's selfish desires. This leader rarely or never considers the opportunity to impact others for Christ associated with one's platform of leadership.

Undying loyalty as one ascends the ladder solidifies the commitment of “The Company Man” in many organizations. These leaders willingly admit that other people contributed to their rise to leadership. They attribute the granting and keeping of their leadership platform to those in power above them. Years of loyal service and pleasing others leave many leaders feeling indebted to another for their opportunity to lead. This view of leadership platform origin inevitably produces a people pleasing leader. The leader who strives to please thinks that he or she must answer to the whims of those above him or her in order to grab the next rung and or protect the leadership turf already secured. The expectations that an individual perceives others to hold guide this leader’s priorities and actions, even if such expectations conflict with one’s personal convictions. This leader may recognize the opportunity to impact others for Christ associated with one’s platform of leadership, but they rarely or never act for fear of displeasing others.

An eternal perspective guides “The Entrusted Leader’s” view of the origin of one’s leadership platform. This third option rests upon a firm belief in God Almighty the sovereign king and ruler of heaven and earth. Wise and humble leaders recognize the work of a higher being who placed them on a platform of leadership. This leader believes in a sovereign and loving God. An Entrusted Leader knows that God providentially granted him or her the authority to lead others. This leader will lead according to God’s standards and not self-centered desires or the expectations of others. Entrusted Leaders recognize the opportunity to impact others for Christ associated with one’s platform of leadership and order their priorities accordingly.

Every leader owes his or her ascent to a platform of leadership to God, who looks for leaders who realize this truth. Read Romans 13:1 and answer the following:

### **Observations of the Biblical Text<sup>1</sup> (Romans 13:1)**

Who has established all human authority?

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What does Paul say everyone must do?

\_\_\_\_\_

Who does Paul say everyone must submit to?

\_\_\_\_\_

What authority exists in the world outside God?

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Questions of Interpretation (Romans 13:1)**

Why should a person submit to all governing authorities?

### **Commentary**

God has established all human authority to lead others. No authority exists in the world that does not find its origin in the sovereign king and ruler of heaven and earth. An individual who occupies a platform of leadership resides there according to God's grace and purpose. Consequently, the Apostle Paul commands everyone to submit to all governing authority. Disobedience to human authority constitutes rebellion against God since he established it in the first place (see Romans 13:2).

The historical backdrop of this passage suggests that Paul had civil government leaders in mind when he wrote Romans 13:1. The first century Roman government oppressed both Christians and Jews. Judaism advocated submission, but some were beginning to call for a rebellion. These sentiments were infiltrating the early church as well. Romans 12:1-2 introduces a lengthy lesson on what it means as a Christian to live a "transformed life" while still on earth. Paul speaks out against civil disobedience

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<sup>1</sup> 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)

primarily because he equates such behavior as rebellion against God. Paul's logic stems from the fact that God established every position of authority and entrusted the responsibility for others to a leader. This hierarchy of leadership exists according to God's purpose and eternal will. Therefore, Christ followers must submit to all authority.

The term "governing authorities" in Romans 13:1 refers to the person who possesses a position of leadership authority. Later in the verse, Paul refers to the "authority" established by God. Paul distinguishes between these two entities that come together to form a single base of leadership activity. Paul argues that everyone must submit to those leaders in charge because God established their span of authority and placed them in the position of leadership. Furthermore, God has acted according to his eternal plan and purpose that continually unfold throughout all of human history. Consider the following examples.

Cyrus, the king of Persia, ruled the known world five hundred plus years before the birth of Christ. In the first chapter of the book of Ezra, Cyrus, a secular king, acknowledges that the Lord God almighty had given him the kingdoms of the world over which to rule. Cyrus went on to publicly proclaim that he believed God had appointed him the task of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. In this example, one sees the convergence of a secular (marketplace) leader, a God ordained platform of leadership, and God's purposes being worked out in human history.

God made Joseph the ruler of all Egypt in order to save a remnant of Israel (Genesis 45:4-8). Again, we find an individual leader and a platform of leadership coming together to be used according to God's purposes. In Exodus three the reader finds a similar story of God selecting Moses to lead Israel out of the bondage in Egypt.

Lastly, consider the case of Esther. God moved this young Jewish girl from obscurity to the royal authority of Queen at just the right moment in history to help avert a plot to destroy the Jewish people. Consider the words of Mordecai: “When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, he sent back this answer: ‘Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?’” (Esther 4:12-14 NIV)

The Apostle Paul assures us in Romans 13:1 that God has established every platform of leadership and the authority associated with these positions of authority. Furthermore, God places individuals on these platforms to lead others according to his purposes. A leader, the authority to lead, and God’s purpose all converge to form a single leadership platform. Just as Mordecai posed the question to Esther a Christ follower must consider: Has God placed me on a platform of leadership that affords me the authority to lead for a specific eternal purpose at a particular point in history?

### **Application**

Paul certainly had the leaders of Rome in mind when he wrote Romans 13:1; however, the principle of a leader occupying a God entrusted platform of leadership can apply to every arena of life. God alone has established a hierarchy of leadership authority in all human organizations, such as: family, business, government, military, church, and ministry. One can conclude that the idea of one person possessing the authority to lead others rests on a sound biblical foundation. Any organization operating without a leader acts inconsistently with God’s Word.

God raises leaders in accordance with his will and purpose. Consequently, every leader must acknowledge that he or she owes his or her ascension to a platform of leadership to God. A leader should strive to determine why God has placed him or her upon a particular platform of leadership and what the Lord desires one to accomplish with his or her entrusted authority. This reality of the origin of leadership authority extends to every position of leadership one holds in the marketplace. To use a platform of leadership for selfish gain or to please others opens a leader to the possibility of leading in a fashion that runs counter to God's purposes.

How do you think God views a leader that uses his or her God entrusted platform of leadership to promote one's selfish agenda instead of God's eternal purposes? Every leader must realize that using one's platform of leadership for personal gain is a misuse of God's investment. Consider the examples of Pharaoh (Exodus 9:16) and Belshazzar (Daniel 5) who both refused to acknowledge God's purpose connected to the platforms of leadership granted to them by God.

Every platform of leadership contains an element of opportunity and responsibility. The opportunity involves using one's authority and position of leadership to impact others for the cause of Christ. The responsibility involves a recognition that God has entrusted each platform of leadership according to his purposes and just as we learned in the Parable of the Talents a leader will someday have to answer for what he or she did with what God entrusted.

Many people hold multiple leadership platforms simultaneously. Many men, for example, live as a father, a marketplace executive, a church elder/deacon, sit on the school board, and serve as the volunteer coach of his son's or daughter's soccer team all

at the same time. Each of these platforms of leadership carries an inherent amount of leadership authority that a leader has the right to exercise. Once again distinction exists between a person, the authority of the position, and God's will for granting them.

Read Galatians 2:20 and answer the following questions.

**Observations of the Biblical Text (Galatians 2:20)**

With whom did Paul say he had been crucified?

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Who did Paul say lived in him?

\_\_\_\_\_

How did Paul say he lived his life in the body?

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What did Paul believe Christ had done for him?

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Read Romans 1:1 and answer the following questions.

**Observations of the Biblical Text (Romans 1:1)**

How did Paul introduce himself?

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What did Paul say he was called to do?

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For what did Paul believe he was set apart?

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**Commentary**

Paul's viewed his self-worth and identity as inseparable from his relationship to Jesus Christ. Nothing outside of Christ's presence in his life defined for Paul who he was. Paul derived his meaning and security of life from the Son of God who loved him and died for him. Consequently, Paul trusted in Jesus Christ for peace of mind and meaning in life not his platforms of leadership or pleasant circumstances.

Paul was a tentmaker by profession (See Acts 18:1-4). Certainly he must have approached tent making with the highest regard for excellence. He identified himself,

however, first and foremost as a servant of Jesus Christ. Paul recognized that God had set him apart for the gospel. This mission framed Paul's view of life and provided the foundation for his self-worth. Making disciples superseded all other marketplace endeavors, including tent making. Paul's discipling of Priscilla and Aquila in the tent making arena provides a good example of how a leader can use a platform of leadership according to God's will. Consider the future ministry efforts of Priscilla and Aquila found in Acts 18:18-26, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Romans 16:3, and 2 Timothy 4:19 as evidence of how Paul's strategy of multiplying disciples worked in a marketplace setting.

As a leader charged with the responsibility of leading others in the marketplace certainly one must faithfully satisfy his or her professional obligations to the organization for which he or she works. A Christ follower must respect the policies and authority God has placed one under in all walks of life, as we have seen in Romans 13:1. Just as I believe Paul did, followers of Christ must approach their professions with the highest regard for excellence. Within the Entrusted Leader concept resides an assumption that a follower of Jesus Christ will always strive to be the best at one's chosen profession. Again, however, just as Paul did in his tent making, the Entrusted Leader must realize a higher calling on his or her life and that one's profession does not define a Christ follower's existence.

I want readers to get this point loud and clear: As a follower of Jesus Christ, your self-worth and identity have no correlation to whatever platforms of leadership on which you stand! Period! Your self worth and identity cannot be separated from your relationship with Jesus Christ! Period! As a modern day follower of Jesus Christ who leads others, no platform of leadership defines who you are. Your significance only

comes from the Son of God who loves you and died for you, not whatever position of leadership you happen to hold at a given moment. Remember, God established the leadership authority you have and has entrusted this responsibility to you for his purpose. God grants and rescinds authority according to his plan and time-table.

A temporal platform of leadership progresses through time with a succession of peaks and valleys. Sometimes the circumstances surrounding one's leadership platform seem to function well. At other times, circumstances seem troublesome. If a leader ties his or her identity and self-worth to the oscillating pattern of a temporal leadership platform, then the leader will experience a roller coaster ride of emotions based on one's perception of circumstances. When conditions appear good, the leader will feel happy and secure. When conditions appear out-of-control, the leader will fall victim to stress, anxiety, and worry. Even worse than the emotional instability produced by the constant fluctuation of circumstances consider the leader whose identity is so entwined with his or her platform of leadership that the very thought of possibly losing one's authority brings on stress and anxiety. Sadly, if this person does have a leadership platform removed from his or her life, he or she typically feels a loss of one's identity and self-worth also.

God did not intend for the followers of Jesus Christ to live insecure lives, even in the face of unsettled circumstances. Paul learned the secret of being content in all circumstances because his identity was founded in Jesus Christ, not a leadership platform (See Philippians 4:10-14). We should follow Paul's example. Such an attitude provides the Christ follower stability in the midst of temporal ups and downs as a leader. The Christian's security and peace of mind are rooted in his or her relationship with Jesus Christ not his or her platform as a leader.

If you truly believe that God has established all authority, that he has entrusted whatever leadership platform you have, and that he is sovereign and loving, then you too can experience the peace of mind and security Paul found by becoming content in all circumstances – good and bad. Realize that God is responsible for you being a marketplace leader not luck, good fortune, other people, or your efforts alone. God looks for leaders who are willing to do all he asks and to acknowledge him as the one who entrusted to a person with the authority and position to lead others in the marketplace.

How you view the origin of leadership authority will impact how and why you lead others. A leader's platform provides an opportunity to impact others for the cause of Christ or to make disciples. Every relationship contained in your platform of leadership holds the potential for a disciple making interchange.

### **The Strategy of Multiplication Applied to a Leadership Platform**

Every Platform of Leadership you hold has the potential for making disciples. Christ followers already have relationships with potentially reliable men and women to whom one can entrust spiritual truth and disciplines. In this section, we will outline how you can develop a simple plan to implement the strategy of multiplying disciples, right where you lead. This plan will work in any platform of leadership. Below a simple five step process outlines a framework for developing a plan for making disciples

Step one is to create a list of platforms you currently hold.

Step two is to pick one of these platforms and identify every person by name with whom you have a relationship. Then repeat this with all other leadership platforms.

The third step concerns defining the nature each of these relationships with the goal of identifying potential “reliable men” that God might be preparing for you to make disciples among.

The fourth step involves establishing a detailed set of priorities and actions that will move the disciple making process along. For example, if you identify someone that is not a Christian, you might set a priority of sharing your testimony and the gospel with this individual within the next six months. Maybe you know a new believer who has never grown spiritually. You might suggest meeting periodically to study God’s Word. The point becomes to develop priorities and a plan for each relationship and implement the actions steps necessary to accomplish your goal.

The last step is perhaps the most important but most overlooked. Step five is to pray for every person by name within the span of your leadership platform. Pray! Pray! Pray! Pray specifically for each platform and individual on your list. Keep a prayer notebook and/or journal.

### **Conclusion**

This lesson completes our teaching on Entrusted Leader core value number two: *A MISSION for leading characterized by a faithful commitment to multiplying followers of Jesus Christ that supersedes all other marketplace endeavors.* Jesus established the mission: Make disciples! The Apostle Paul gave Timothy the strategy of multiplication for making disciples. God intends and desires for this mission and strategy to rise above all other marketplace endeavors and become the preeminent priority in all your leadership opportunities.

God has entrusted you with various platforms of leadership which provide a position upon which you can stand and whereby others publicly recognize your authority to lead. Each position of leadership you hold provides a platform entrusted to you by God that contains multiple opportunities to impact others for the mission of Christ. God desires you to develop a disciple making action plan for each platform of leadership you possess. By doing so, a leader will move towards making the Entrusted Leader core value number two a reality - A MISSION for leading characterized by a faithful commitment to multiplying followers of Jesus Christ that supersedes all other marketplace endeavors.