

# Tools for Wise Leadership

*A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa*

**Series 11: Levels of Leadership**

**Talk 07: The Personhood Level of Leadership**

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Welcome to the programme Tools for Wise Leadership. We are focusing on leadership levels and how they relate to the kind of leader you become. Of the five levels of leadership we have so far discussed the position, permission, production and reproduction levels of leadership, taking our cue from leadership expert John Maxwell.

We ended our discussion of the people development level of leadership by discussing the three principles of mentoring that Jesus used very successfully, the principles of selection, association and instruction. It is all part of that level of leadership we have been discussing – the level called people development. Have you as a leader reached this level yet? Do not be satisfied with the position level of leadership where people follow you because they have no choice. Nor should you be satisfied with the permission Level where people follow you because you have connected with them. You have to build on the permission Level to reach the production level where people follow you because of what you have done for the organization. That in turn should lead to the people development level where people follow you because you have impacted their lives as you reproduce yourself.

Today we conclude the discussion of levels of leadership by discussing the fifth level that Maxwell calls Personhood. At this level people will follow you because of who you are; in other words what you represent. To get to this level takes spending many years growing people and organizations. You are now larger than life.

Let us illustrate this level of personhood through the biblical example of Samuel. His life is summed up in 1. Samuel 3:19-20 which says:

So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all of Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord.”

Imagine what kind of stature Samuel had achieved. *And all of Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord. That means everyone knew and respected him from as far North as you could go in Israel, to as far South as you could go.* Now that's a lot of recognition. Samuel had achieved the level of personhood. The respect he had gained was so huge that people listened to his advice, whether it was for a strategy to use against the Philistines or they needed direction for their future. Now that is a lot of influence. He had gained the authority to depose Saul as king and anoint David as the replacement. That is not something that could be done by an ordinary person. It took personhood to get to that level of influence.

But the question is what helped Samuel to get to that level? We can point to several factors.

- Firstly Samuel exhibited the heart of a servant leader.
- Secondly since he was a young child Samuel learned to recognize the voice of God. People respected his faithful walk with God.
- Thirdly, that means he had the courage to speak the truth in love. His first prophecy was against the family of his mentor, Eli. That was the first of many times God would use Samuel to speak a hard truth while leading God's people.
- Fourthly Samuel identified with the Israelites and walked in integrity throughout his life.

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The impact of Samuel's life was so great that when he died, all of Israel gathered to mourn his loss (1. Samuel 25:1).

There are other biblical characters who achieved such personhood. For example we also have Moses who was so foundational to the establishment of the covenant between God and the nation of Israel at its formative stage during the 40 year journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Moses' leadership journey is summarized in Hebrews 11:27 which says, "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible."

Indeed Moses had to endure many hardships. He had to deal with circumstantial hardships of people, like when there was no water for them to drink. He had to face external threats, like the time the Amalekites attacked the unsuspecting Israelites at Rephidim. Then he frequently had to endure internal discontent and even rebellion from his own people. Yet in the midst of their whining and complaining, Moses repeatedly interceded on their behalf. He often reminded God that in spite of their disobedience, they were His chosen people. Anybody of lesser stature would have given up leadership. But not Moses. His faithfulness to God under difficult circumstances earned him the respect that he had. When Moses finally died we are told in *Deuteronomy 34:8*, "*And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days.*" Why? Because they knew they had lost a great man indeed.

In the New Testament we can think of Paul the Apostle. From the time of his conversion he totally dedicated himself to the missionary work of taking the gospel to as many lands as he could. It is Paul who in Acts 20:24 said, "I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace." So committed was Paul to the task that almost half of the New Testament books are attributed to him. He had achieved the personhood level of leadership.

But obviously no biblical character achieved the personhood level more than Jesus Christ did. Because of his sacrificial death on the cross, followed by his resurrection for our justification, the Christian faith is named after him. While Samuel was respected in Israel from Dan to Beersheba, Jesus has become a household name throughout the world.

But the personhood level has been achieved by other people since the biblical days. Think of Billy Graham. His stature is such that he preaches a simple basic message but people respond in large numbers. Or think of Martin Luther King (Jnr). He was the black American leader with a dream – a man who was prepared to sacrifice his life to see his dream being realized. Closer to our time we can think of Nelson Mandela who spent 27 years in prison in a fight for justice and equality. When he came out of prison he was without bitterness towards those who had treated him so unjustly. He showed his capacity for a large heart, a heart that could accommodate black and white people, young and old. In people like Mandela, Martin Luther King (Jnr) and Billy Graham we have people larger than life – people who have achieved the level of personhood as leaders. At this level people follow because of who you are and what you represent. This step is reserved for leaders who have spent years growing people and organizations.

This level represents a life of integrity, of competence, and of pouring yourself into others. Which of course means that few make it to this level. But does it mean we should not aim to reach this level? No. Our attitude should be like that of Paul who said in *Philippians 3:12-14*,

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, 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."

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That is personhood. Paul achieved it despite all the disadvantages that he suffered. We too can achieve that level if we are prepared to live a life of integrity, and of sacrificial service.

Until we meet in the next programme, good bye and God bless you.

### Discussion Questions for: Series 11 - Talk 7 - The Personhood Level of Leadership

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For this series of *Levels of Leadership* you can use the following study questions to guide you in deepening the impact of this series:

**Study Question 1: for Personal reflection**

What does this episode mean to you personally as a leader?

**Study Question 2: for Group Discussion**

What does this topic mean you as a group of leaders?

**Study Question 3: for applying the topic**

What can you apply from this topic in your role as a leader?

### Summary:

Biblical leaders like Samuel, David and Paul reached the level of 'personhood leadership'. People followed them for who they were and what they represented. This kind of leadership is what you, Christian leader, should aspire to.

### Discussion Questions:

**Study Question 1: Personal reflection**

Christian leader, why do people follow you?

**Study Question 2: Group Discussion**

Besides the obvious fact of His divinity, what is it about Jesus that has caused so many people to follow Him?

**Study Question 3: Applying the topic**

Think about who you are and what you represent, are these characteristics worth following? What steps can you take to become a person worth following?

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