

Leadership Development Program

Module 6 – Influence



Luke 6:31 *“And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.”*

Fulfilling a leadership role means that we need to get things done through others. There are a number of ways that we can try to get people to do what we want them to do. In the preceding Scripture, Jesus said that we should treat people in the manner in which we wish to be treated ourselves. This is as equally true in our family and friendships as it is with those we lead. This “golden rule” is the most important thing we can know about influence. This rule says that if we treat people well, they will treat us well in return. This is also called “the principle of reciprocity”.

Developing Influence

2 Thessalonians 3:9 *“Not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.”*

We cannot develop true influence by relying on our position of authority. In the preceding Scripture, Paul made it clear that even though he had positional authority with the Thessalonian church, he didn’t use this authority with them. Instead, he relied on his example to them to encourage them to behave in a certain way. Similarly, we cannot rely on a leadership position to develop true influence. We have true influence when someone willingly helps us to do something they are not particularly required to do.

In every team or organisation there are some people whom others are very willing to help and yet there are also other people whom struggle to get assistance. This is normally the case because the former group of people has first given something to others and the latter group has not.

Luke 6:38 *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

The preceding Scripture from Luke says that if we give, it will be given back. This principle shows us how to build influence. We first give to others. There are two key aspects that make this “principle of reciprocity” work.

Firstly, we must give not expecting anything in return. If we give to someone and they feel that we will call on the favour sometime, then no influence is generated. This is manipulation and has the reverse effect to true influence. People resist us when we try to manipulate them. There must be “no strings attached” to our giving. We do not gain influence by trying to gain influence. We gain it by giving. The “strings” are effectively attached voluntarily by the one influenced.

Secondly, the person must value what is being given. For example, if you are offering someone friendship and they have no desire to be your friend, they will most likely withdraw further from you as a result of your giving. If you are offering inspiration and they do not find you inspirational, then, again, they will not be influenced by you.

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The scope of giving

It is important to understand the range of ways in which we can “do unto others”. These different types of giving are called “currencies of exchange”. These “currencies of exchange” include inspiring people, helping people with tasks, using our position to advance other’s prospects, building a personal relationship with others and strengthening others personal value.

The key is to understand that if we want to influence someone, we must first give them something they value with no strings attached. If we wish to influence a diverse group of people, we should develop a diverse range of giving. Most people seem to be good at giving one or two “currencies” and so influence one or two types of people. This is why many leaders attract the same types of people. They give a limited range of gifts and those who value those gifts are attracted to that leader. I am not saying that a leader should attract every type of person, just that they may want to consider the range of gifts they are giving to potentially influence a broader range of people.

Christians should be able to easily start this process of influence with people. They shouldn’t need to receive from others before they start to give to them. They should be able to receive gifts for people from the Spirit of God and distribute them as freely as they have received them. The types of gifts that God gives to us are the things we can freely give. He gives “gifts” to us for the benefit of others, so these must be the things that people really need and want.

We can freely receive love from the Father and distribute that love as freely as we have received it. Since we are called and gifted in different ways, the packages of love that we distribute will look different to the packages that another person distributes. To understand this more fully, we will look at two lists of gifts in the Scriptures. These gifts that the Lord gives us are gifts of His grace to help others.

The operational gifts

Let’s first of all look at the “operational” or “motivational” gifts that are listed in Romans chapter twelve. Every person has each of the motivational gifts to some degree, (as all of the motivational gifts are aspects of the Christian life), it is just that we have some gifts in a greater measure than others.

Romans 12:6-8 *“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”*

To start the process of building influence through giving, let’s consider the types of giving that we can do from these “motivational” or “operational” gifts.

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Prophecy

The word “prophecy” in the preceding passage from Romans chapter twelve refers to prediction. In other places of Scripture the word “prophecy” is a different root word and refers to “consolation” and “comfort”. Through this Romans 12 type of prophecy, we can see the “writing on the wall” for people because of our experience or through our spiritual insight. We can give that insight to people freely and when our insight proves true, we build influence with them. We can give people the benefit of this gift in personal assistance, for their decision making or for other reasons. If we are especially gifted in prophecy, the question for us is “Who can we help to have a better future because of our spiritual insight or experience?”

Ministry

The word “ministry” simply means to help someone with their tasks. This gift of ministry is, of course, available to all of us to give in different measures. There are a variety of ways in which we can help others with tasks, depending on the resources available to us. *Firstly*, we can get new resources to them. We can give them money or other resources, help them to save money or arrange others to help them. *Secondly*, we can provide challenge or learning. These challenges will help people increase their skills and abilities. The teaching or training or advice we deliver to them can help make their lives better. *Thirdly*, we can give direct or subtle help with the tasks they do. We can do things for them. We can make sure that we respond quickly to them. *Fourthly*, we can give them information that we have. We may have wisdom or technical knowledge that can help them.

Our “ministry” giving can help others achieve more and by giving to them through this gift, we build influence with them. If we are especially gifted with the “ministry” gift, the questions for us are “What do I have to help people with?” and “Who can I help?”

Teaching

Each of us has knowledge that we can pass onto to others. Some of us have a gift of understanding, revelation and wisdom to help others see through information overload to understand what is important. This has become even more valuable in the age of the internet. There is so much information available at our fingertips but what is relevant, what actually works and how do we apply it to our situation? Those with a gift of teaching can, for example, help others with on-the-job training, conduct courses, give informal training sessions, write blogs or books. If you have a stronger gift in teaching, the questions for you are “Who is it that can benefit from what you know?” and “How are you going to get the information to them?”

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Exhorting

Exhortation has two aspects - comfort and encouragement. Our exhortation can be in the form of gratitude. We can express our appreciation or indebtedness to people, giving them encouragement that their efforts are noticed and valued. We can build their self-concept by affirming their identity, personality, values and self-esteem. We can comfort people by helping them avoid hassles or smoothing the way for them. As we give by building people up we gain influence with them. If we are especially gifted in exhortation, the questions for us are “Who needs comfort and encouragement around me?” and “How can I give it to them?”

Giving

The “gift of giving” refers to the giving of resources including finances. This gift is not only for richer people. It comes to people at all levels of wealth. People with this gift give freely of what they have. The preceding Romans twelve Scripture says to give with “liberality”. The Greek word used for liberality literally means “singleness, sincerity or simplicity”

Proverbs 18:16 *“A man’s gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.”*

We can read the preceding Proverbs Scripture two ways. Firstly, it can be read as saying that when we operate in any of the gifts that God has given to us, we connect with people of influence. This is observably true. Operating in our particular gift brings us greater connection with a wide group of people. However, this Scripture is more accurately read that the resources (including money) we give to people causes room to be made for us and facilitates people of influence to connect with us.

This means that we can develop influence by freely giving resources to those around us. This should not be an attempt to buy influence. As we discussed earlier, if we give anything (including money) in an attempt to gain a return, we do not build influence. If we have a gift of giving, the question for us is “Who is there that we can sincerely give resources to who would benefit from our giving?”

Leading

There is a gift of leadership that we all have to some extent. Those with the gift of leadership can provide example, inspiration, vision and value to people that causes them to want to travel in the same direction as the leader. Leadership may be an aspiration to some people, and leaders may use the gift to serve their own ends, but the motivational gift of leadership is a gift from God to serve others and give others the benefits of the gift.

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The leadership gift brings vision to provide direction, motivation to travel in that direction and power to sustain that effort over the long haul. Those with a leadership gift can give others the benefit of being involved in a project or task that has larger significance for their team, church or society. Leaders also inspire and facilitate excellence. Leaders can give people a chance of doing important things very well and by doing so give others levels of achievement that they may not otherwise have reached.

Leaders also normally reach “higher” positions in organisations. When people occupy higher positions, they can use their position to serve themselves or use it to serve others. There are several key ways that leaders can use their position to give to others. *Firstly*, they can give recognition. The higher you are in an organization, the more powerful your verbal and other recognition can be. As you use your position to acknowledge accomplishments and efforts, you give people a greater sense of value. You can also use your position to help build other’s reputation by encouraging people to see them as committed and competent. *Secondly*, you can use your position to increase the visibility of others. You can make others known to other “higher-ups” or significant people. You can also link people with others who will be helpful to their future. The higher your position the more options that you have. You can also give them a sense of “insider-ness”. This increases a person’s sense of belonging and importance. *Thirdly*, you can give people ownership or involvement over important tasks. In this way, you can use your position to help people fulfil more important roles.

Giving to others with your gift of leadership builds influence with them. The question for us is “Who are we helping with our gift of leadership?” and “How exactly are we helping them?”

Mercy

We all have a measure of compassion from God to give to others, and there are always people around us who are in difficult circumstances who value someone expressing empathy and assistance. As we give this mercy, we develop influence with these people. We can give mercy by listening to concerns and issues. We can give acceptance or inclusion. The closeness and friendship we provide builds people’s sense of wholeness. We can provide personal support by understanding people’s personal lives and bringing emotional support to them. If we have a gift of mercy, the question for us is “Who are we helping?”

A leader gives something

All of the Romans twelve operational gifts are an expression of God’s love. It is equally an expression of His love to give leadership as it is to give mercy as well as all the other motivational gifts. Although we are all able to give a measure of all of these operational gifts, we have been given a greater measure of some of them than others. Our default position should be to continue to focus on those particular gifts that God has given to us. If that gift is leadership, then we should give through leading with all the resources we have; if

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our strongest gift is in mercy, then we should focus on that. Having said that, we should aim to respond to each individual to help them according to where their particular need is.

Action Point

- ***Consider these seven operational gifts and select one or two that the Lord has given you gifts in. Now consider how you can give to others from the grace that that you have already been given***

Giving the spiritual gifts

The second category of gifts that God gives to us that we give to others is the spiritual gifts listed in first Corinthians chapter twelve. We can freely give others these more “instantaneous” gifts that the Spirit gives us. We don’t use the spiritual gifts merely to build influence but we do build influence when we use them.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11: *“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”*

The “spiritual” gifts listed in the preceding passage of Scripture are ways that we can “do unto others”. These spiritual gifts are as “He wills”, so our role is to understand what they are, how they operate and deliver them as they are delivered to us. These “spiritual gifts” are normally grouped into three groups of three, but for our purposes it is better to look at them in five groups.

The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge

Sometimes the best gift we can give people is words. Actions don’t always speak louder. Words of wisdom are a gift from God to help people know what plans and direction to take. Words of knowledge are a gift from God to help people understand the previously hidden details of a situation. We can give to people by listening to God for these words. These “words” are often part of the gift of prophecy that we discussed earlier.

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Faith

Every believer has faith, but the gift of faith is an impartation of faith from God that is at a higher level than you normally operate in. You can use your gift of faith for people by committing yourself to pray and believe for their situations to change.

Gifts of healings and the working of miracles

Healings and miracles are gifts from God to bring restoration to people's bodies and lives - whether it is their financial world or their physical body. We can give health and prosperity to people through being available to be used in these gifts.

Prophecy, different kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues

Prophecy is so important that it makes it onto many lists of gifts in some form. We already have covered this gift earlier in this module, so we won't repeat that discussion. Tongues and the interpretation of tongues are another way for God to give a gift of prophecy. Tongues and interpretation of tongues are both given spiritually and together so that we can give prophecy without the need to rationally understand what we are saying. We can build influence by giving people these prophetic words.

Discerning of spirits

The discerning of spirits is a gift from God to help people to distinguish what spirits are influencing and guiding them. We can give advice to people as to whether the spirits influencing them are positive (from God), neutral (from themselves, and can be constructive or destructive) or negative (from the enemy). This discernment will help them to make better decisions.

The preceding section was not intended to be a detailed coverage of the motivational and spiritual gifts, but to bring our attention to the variety of ways in which we can give to others. God knows what people need so these lists of gifts are provided to assist you in understanding the range of giving available to you.

In giving to others, we develop influence with them. The key is that we give. We don't give and ask for a response. That is not influence, it is trading. We don't give and then give off the vibe that we will expect that the favour is returned. That's manipulation. True influencers are unconditional givers and as a result, others want to give back to them in return.

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Influence is also the basis for effective evangelism

Having influence is also an important catalyst for people's receptivity to the gospel. Throughout the books of the New Testament, a believer usually first gave something to the hearers from a motivational or spiritual gift which helped the receivers of those gifts to listen with an open heart and mind to the message with the result that they believed.

Romans 1:16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”*

The preceding Scripture says that the gospel contains the power of God for salvation. The gospel is powerful but is only powerful “for everyone who believes”. We also have a role to play and that role is to help other people open a window of belief so there is an avenue for the gospel to travel. We can open that avenue by building influence. The apostle Paul is a great example of this.

1 Corinthians 9:20-23 (NLT) *“When I am with the Jews, I become one of them so that I can bring them to Christ. When I am with those who follow the Jewish laws, I do the same, even though I am not subject to the law, so that I can bring them to Christ. When I am with the Gentiles who do not have the Jewish law, I fit in with them as much as I can. In this way, I gain their confidence and bring them to Christ. But I do not discard the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are oppressed, I share their oppression so that I might bring them to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone so that I might bring them to Christ. I do all this to spread the Good News, and in doing so I enjoy its blessings.”*

In the preceding passage of Scripture, Paul drew upon all of his abilities to identify and connect with many different types of people to open their hearts to the gospel. Paul adopted as much of the behaviours of the different people as he could. This acceptance of people paved the way for Paul to be able to deliver the gospel to them.

Even Jesus needed to give to people before many of them received his message. He taught, healed and performed miracles then people believed. For example, He reached out with acceptance to a reviled tax collector, Zaccheus, by going to his house for dinner and only then “salvation came to his house” (Luke 19:9).

Action Point

- **Consider the people closest to you – family, friends, colleagues and those you lead. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you something that they need – prophecy, healing, discernment, whatever. Give it to them without any strings attached, as a gift.**