

The A, E, I, O, U of Leadership

Summary:

The Five Basic Qualities of a Leader

A-Attitude

E-Example

I-Influence

O-Ownership

U-Understanding

Key Scriptures for this lesson:

- James 3:1- “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”
- Leviticus 10:3- “And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the Lord spoke, saying: By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.’”
- Exodus 18:21- “Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of ten.”
- 1 Peter 5:1-4- “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly, not for dishonest gain, but eagerly, nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock, and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

The A, E, I, O, U of Leadership

What does it take to be a leader? Some believe leadership is about having a following. Some believe leadership is about being popular. Yet, the most basic qualities of leadership can be boiled down to the five vowels. The qualities are A-Attitude, E-Example, I-Influence, O-Ownership, and U-Understanding. These qualities are the foundation of one’s leadership abilities, and each leader must incorporate them into their lives on a daily basis.

A-Attitude

Zig Ziglar said, “Your attitude determines your altitude.” A leader must have the quality of the right attitude. Or, more specifically, the right attitudes. A leader must have a dependent attitude based on John 15:4-5. A leader must have a positive attitude based on Psalm 118:24. A leader must have a dependable attitude based on Colossians 3:23. A leader must have a supportive attitude based on Numbers 11:1. A leader must have a humble attitude based on John 3:30 and Acts 14:14-15. A leader must have a persevering attitude based on Philippians 4:13. Lastly, a leader must have a caring attitude based on Philippians 2:3-4. A good attitude will lead to great success in leadership!

Yet, a bad attitude can exist and will lead to the downfall of your leadership. Recognizing a growing bad attitude is essential to leadership success. There are six descriptions of your spirit that tell you that you have a bad attitude.

First, a bad attitude exists where a critical spirit exists. A critical spirit is when you desire to make yourself and others better, rather it's when your pride manifests in making yourself the perfect example. A critical spirit is often expressed with the phrase, "If I were I charge..."

Second, a bad attitude exists where a depressed spirit exists. A depressed spirit manifests when one's faith is weak and leads to a pessimistic outlook. A depressed spirit wears a person out as they seem to be under constant pressure. A depressed spirit usually develops when you've lacked solid spiritual habits and leave sin unconfessed.

Third, a bad attitude exists where a resentful spirit exists. A resentful spirit reveals itself with a dislike for those who are excelling regardless of where they are or what they do. Often this is based on a poor self-image.

Fourth, a bad attitude exists where a selfish spirit exists. Often this spirit is based on materialism and covetousness. Jesus condemned this attitude in Matthew 23:25.

Fifth, a bad attitude exists where a negative spirit exists. This spirit comes about from an anemic prayer life. This spirit reveals itself in the statement, "It can't be done." The negative spirit constantly challenges the motives of others and votes no on everything.

Lastly, a bad attitude exists where an irritable spirit exists. An irritable spirit exists when someone has a poor personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. This spirit will be touchy and overly sensitive, and they are constantly having a bad day. Remember, it is not just how you act but how you react to pressure and problems.

E-Example

"Being a leader calls for life in a fishbowl!" The credibility of a leader is established in his actions more than in his words. Norman Vincent Peale said, "Nothing is more confusing than people who give good advice but set bad examples." Being a good and right example is absolutely necessary for leadership. Scripture attests to this:

1 Timothy 4:12 "Let no one look down on your youth, but rather be an example for the believers in word, in conduct, that is your behavior, your life, in love, in attitude, in faith and in purity."

1 Peter 5:2-3 "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly, not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

Hebrews 13:7 "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their faith."

1 Corinthians 4:16 "Therefore I urge you to imitate me."

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

Philippians 3:17 "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you."

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

We need to be able to say to those we lead, what Paul said in Philippians 4:9- “The things which you learned and received and heard and seen in me, these do (put it into practice) and the God of peace will be with you.”

The seriousness of this is seen in I Sam. 2:22-25 and in Lev. 10:1-3. I believe this is why James says not many should desire to be teachers. (James 3:1) “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” This calls for living a life that is blameless. (1 Timothy 3:1) It calls for living a life based on solid principles and established convictions. (Daniel 1:8). We are to be known as men and women of integrity by God, the people we work with, and even those who are not saved.

Dwight Eisenhower said, “In order to be a leader a man must have followers. And to have followers, a man must have their confidence. Hence, the supreme quality for a leader is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office. If a man’s associates find him guilty of phoniness, if they find that he lacks forthright integrity, he will fail. His teachings and his actions must square with each other. The first great need, therefore, is integrity and high purpose.”

I-Influence

“Leadership is influence!” Leaders must have the ability to be a thermometer and a thermostat. A leader must be able to know the temperature of the room. He must know what people are thinking and feeling. He needs to know what gives people doubts and what excites them. But knowing those things isn’t enough. He must also be able to change the temperature of the room. He needs to be able to ease doubt. He needs to be able to stoke the flames of excitement. The only way to do that is by having influence with the people you’re leading. Nehemiah 13 is a great passage on how a leader influences the people of God to follow God. A leader with no influence will take people nowhere. A leader who has influence can lead people to follow God’s will.

O-Ownership

“If it is to be it is up to me!” When Nehemiah cast the vision to the people to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, he called on them to help. When they said yes, he assigned many of them to rebuild the wall where they lived. Nehemiah knew that if the people had a personal stake in the building of the wall, they would do it. Likewise, a leader has to take ownership over what’s happening. The successes or the failures of a ministry, church, or team must affect the leader as much as the follower. A leader must have “skin in the game.” Ownership also means a leader must say, “The buck stops with me.” A leader doesn’t seek to blame everyone else; he takes ownership over everything.

U-Understanding

Leadership requires understanding what the goals and assignments are. Leadership isn't wandering; it's aiming for a specific designation. A leader must understand what he's trying to accomplish and how to accomplish it. Sometimes, a leader is also a follower. Your leadership may be a part of following someone else's goals. At a minimum, every Christian leader is following the ultimate leadership of Christ. Understanding your role in another person's leadership is essential both to accomplish the leader's goals and yours.

Conclusion

These most basic qualities of a leader are foundational to successful leadership. Without these elements, leadership will falter and ultimately fail. I encourage you to daily seek to see these qualities exist in your life.