

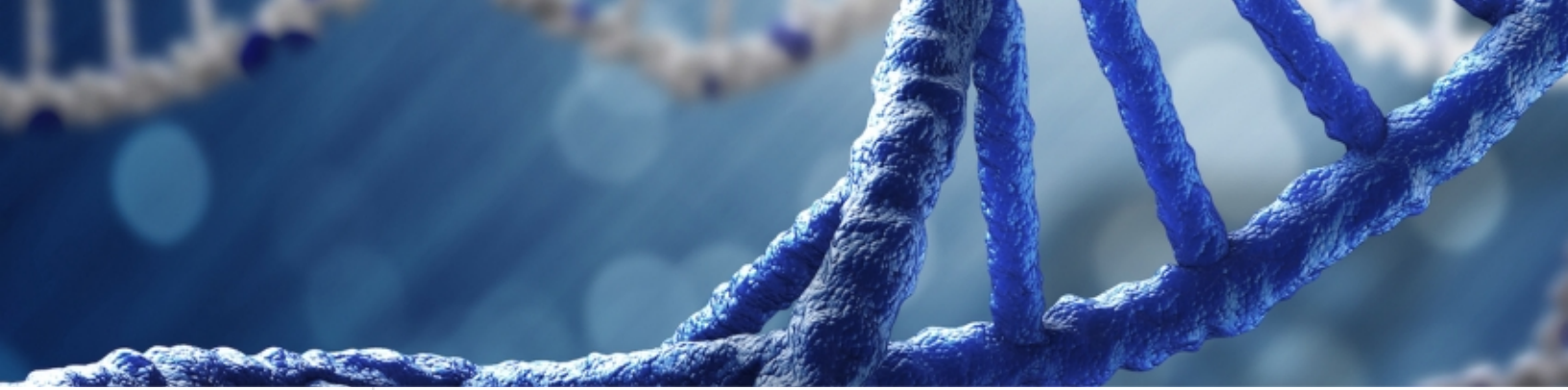


Defining Biblical Leadership

AT ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH

Relationship | Example | Attributes | Priorities

*We can expect to **REAP** influence when investing in the right values*



Characteristics of
Biblical Leadership:

Relationships

Jesus
Others

Example

Character
Modeling
Stewardship
Intentionality

Attributes

Teachability
Involvement
Dependability

Priorities

Servanthood
Faithfulness
Passion

These values are our DNA.

It is true that without a clear vision, members of a group will craft their own (Proverbs 29:18). Likewise, without defining key values of leadership and spiritual maturity, a ministry can fail to establish clear expectations.

In the time of the Old Testament judges, the people did “what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 21:25). In an era of time when Israel lacked the prophetic voice, they lost the compass for correct values. The use of *values* in this case is not simply addressing *moral values*, it also includes *leadership values*.

Without the Word of God, it is possible to have the wrong definition of a leader. The good news is that the material in this booklet contains **the definition of a Biblical leader**. It provides a guide for growing leaders here at Abundant Life. These values are the core of our culture— our very DNA.

While none of us will ever completely “arrive” at perfection, each of us are expected to embrace these principles as a perpetual goal and lifestyle. Furthermore, these values are not to stop with us personally since “leaders beget more leaders”. We must encourage these values among those we lead, reinforcing the culture throughout the church body.

The objective of the “REAP” acronym is to internalize these principles so we can replicate them both in personal practice and discipleship of others.

Right values REAP abundant rewards!



Rev. David M. Reeve
Senior Pastor
Abundant Life Church

Relationships

Jesus / Others

Example

Character / Modeling / Stewardship / Intentionality

Attributes

Teachability / Involvement / Dependability

Priorities

Servanthood / Faithfulness / Passion



Answer the call of leadership.

It is essential to both the work of the ministry and your personal growth that you answer the call of leadership. Yet we commonly face challenges that intimidate or inhibit us from embracing the role of a leader.

Most often, we tend to disqualify ourselves; thinking that we are incapable of leading if we lack the personality traits of the leaders in our lives (i.e. outgoing, articulate, well educated, etc). You must be cautious to **avoid a tainted ideal of leadership** that breeds confusion, frustration, and ineffective ministries. Popular culture in the world has a definition of leadership that is contrary to the spirit of ministry found in the Church. Our godly desires and callings can lead to disaster if we pursue them according to the world's standards and ideas.

At Abundant Life, we strive to emulate key characteristics of Biblical leaders. Using the Bible as our guide, we find that leadership is intrinsically tied to our attitude-- submission to God and others. Leadership is found in **valuing and developing a principle-centered life** revolving around God's Word and directives. We will only achieve God's Will for our life and leadership using His values and principles.

So let's look at some characteristics that define a Biblical leader. This list can serve as a guide as you fulfill God's call to leadership in your home, neighborhood, workplace and ministry.

You can expect to **REAP** a great harvest when you model these Biblical characteristics in your **R**elationships, **E**xample, **A**tttributes and **P**riorities.

Leadership is found in valuing and developing a principle-centered life revolving around God's Word and directives.

Christina Reever



RELATIONSHIPS

Ephesians 4:16

He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

The foundation of Biblical leadership.

Much of leadership involves interactions. Leadership in the Church consists of using authority to positively influence our fellow believers to productive action for the Kingdom of God (Ephesians 4:11-12). Abundant Life leaders understand that since ultimate authority originates from Christ (Matthew 28:18), that we are to first submit ourselves under His authority. When we operate in our leadership capacity we should exercise delegated authority in the same spirit of humility and love as Christ.

To do so effectively we must have a right relationship with Jesus that leads to healthy interactions with others.

Jesus

A relationship with Jesus is the foundation on which Biblical leadership must be built. We must get to know Him so we can learn what He wants for our lives and the ministries in which we serve. We cannot change lives with cute marketing schemes or professional programs. Of course we will always do our best for God, but our fleshly efforts can never take the place of a Spirit-led life and ministry. That is our ultimate goal.

We may not like this at times because it takes the spotlight off of us--our talents and abilities. But we must understand that our validation comes from God. If we are listening to God and doing what He says, His approval and recognition are all we need.

Others

We must embrace the value of the body, the importance of each member, and how we work together. You are not in competition with a fellow believer. Rather, we work together as the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16). Reject selfish ambition as Scripture instructs us in James 3:16-17.

We need each member of the body to do its unique job -- one supplies where another is lacking. No one should worry about being devalued as we are all equally important and interdependent. When one wins, we all win.

Here are several ways we optimize our relationships with others:

Seek to Save

This is Jesus' priority and the primary mission of the church (Luke 19:10). Everything we do should be in support of this ultimate goal—winning the lost, also known as disciple-making. If the ministry we want to pursue does not contribute to this goal, then we would be wise to rethink our motives.

Seek to Unify

Unity is more important than our personal desires. We all have our own ideas and opinions. Christ did too. Yet He came in meekness, willingly giving up His rights (Philippians 2:6-7). This kind of spirit is rare in today's world. It is more likely to hear "I'm not anyone's doormat!" than, "Let's try it your way."

Putting star players on the same team does not always equal championships. Too often, they are more interested in their stat lines instead of what is best for the team. Unity is damaged and the team suffers. True star players show their greatest strength by doing what is best for the team instead of what may be best for them individually.

Seek to Redeem

We are all human. Try as we might, we will inevitably frustrate and disappoint one another. When this happens, we have a choice in how to react. We must always seek to edify, restore, build bridges, empower and encourage rather than manipulate, demean, divide, dominate, and control (2 Corinthians 5:18). We are called to lovingly hold others accountable. But do so with genuine concern and a desire for what is best. Remember the "Golden Rule" and treat others the way you would want to be treated if you had failed or fallen.

Seek to Understand

We should seek to understand rather than be understood. In times of conflict, it is easy to assume and accuse. After all, we judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their actions. If our neighbor offends us in some way, we may become angry or bitter if we rush to judgement. However, our assumptions are often wrong. We should learn to ask questions before rushing to an accusation. This limits our relational health, breaks the unity of the church, and hampers our ability to work through issues.

James 3:16-17

For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.

2 Corinthians 5:18

And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him.

EXAMPLE



Acts 6:3

And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility.

Become a leader worth following.

As Christian leaders, we must set an example for others to follow. We must live out Paul's admonition to the Corinthian church, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). We set the example in several ways, including:

Character

Character is more important than ability. Who we are is more important than what we do. We may temporarily distract people with our charisma or glitzy performances, but in stressful and troubled times, the leader they will follow is someone of substance, someone of Godly character (Acts 6:3). Rather than focusing so much on doing more and more for God, **we should seek to be more and more like Him**. Not only does this make us effective in leading others in doing God's work, it also helps them become who He wants them to be.

Modeling

We just said that "who we are is more important than what we do", and that is true. But what we do is also important because it demonstrates what we value and what we expect as leaders. We are responsible to instruct people on what they should do and how they should do it. But we can never exempt ourselves from those same instructions (1 Corinthians 11:1). **We must practice what we preach**. Actions speak louder than words, and we never want it said that people cannot hear what we are saying over the noise of what we are doing.



Stewardship

As Christian leaders, we are managers and overseers of God's people and His stuff. God's people are not commodities we can use to make our lives easier. They are not ours to boss around; they belong to God. Likewise, God's stuff does not belong to us; it belongs to Him, and **we must respect it and treat it as such**. God's work is not optional; we cannot do it when we feel like it and ignore it when it becomes an inconvenience (2 Corinthians 5:10). Stewardship demands more than that.

Intentionality

Every act matters. The butterfly effect teaches us that small changes can have large and far-reaching effects. We must embrace that our actions, known or unknown, have eternal effects. We may be tempted to undervalue the "little things" God asks us to do because we think they won't really make a difference (Matthew 25:21). Or we may shirk them because we believe nobody will see or appreciate what we did. However, **we must be intentional to do the right things** because they are right, trusting that God is in control and has a purpose behind it all.

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1 Corinthians 11:1

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Matthew 25:21

Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!



ATTRIBUTES

The measure of a leader.

Here we attempt to narrow the many attributes defining a Biblical leader. The following are not characteristics that we have no ability to change, like our height or eye color or personality. **We all have the ability to learn and grow in these attributes** by modeling the life of Christ and doing our best to live as He lived.

Teachability

Regardless of knowledge personally gained, we will always be able to learn from others. If we find ourselves with something to say in every situation, if we are constantly critiquing others and “sharing wisdom” with them, we may need to check our motive. Maybe instead of sharing, we need to be quiet and listen and learn sometimes. There is no reason for us to be insecure or defensive about not knowing everything. There is not any one of us that knows everything. **The key is to learn from one another (Proverbs 11:14).** And not just fellow leaders. We would be wise to be eager to learn from any reputable source—books, formal training, people, and experience.

When we need help with something, we should be mature enough to find someone who can help us and partner with them. This allows us to learn and our partners to use the giftings God has given them.

Involvement

As a leader, I should be involved. I should be faithful in all core church expectations and activities, not just my little corner or my ministry area (Hebrews 10:25). This does not mean that everybody has to do everything. That would limit what we can accomplish. But there are core things we should do just because we want to be saved.

Proverbs 11:14

Without wise leadership, a nation falls; there is safety in having many advisers.



If I exempt myself from these things because they are not “my ministry,” I show that my real motive may be selfishness or pride instead of the good of the Kingdom. I should **stand ready and willing to help** my brother and sister and lighten their load however I can.

Dependability

What is dependability? The best definition may be fulfilling what I agreed to do even though it calls for unexpected sacrifices. What does that look like? Well, when I commit to something, I do not later change my mind and renege on my promise because a better option became available. I do not “opt out” of commitments because they end up being more work than I counted on. I do not excuse myself because an opportunity for fun came along and I enjoy that a whole lot better. Count the costs before you commit. But once you do, follow through no matter what (Luke 14:28-30).

Luke 14:28-30

But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'

PRIORITIES



Our priorities will largely determine our success, so we must choose wisely.

Colossians 3:23-24

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

The pursuit of Biblical leadership.

Leaders must set the direction for their teams and, ultimately, the organization. Because resources are finite, we cannot go in every direction at once. We cannot do everything all the time. So we have to make choices—sometimes difficult ones—on which things to pursue and which to discard. Our priorities will largely determine our success, so we must choose wisely. We should choose:

Servanthood over Sovereignty

Jesus said, “Those who want to be great should be the servant of all” (Matthew 23:11-12). The Kingdom of God does not need self-serving leaders who want to climb a pinnacle so that they can get their way and lord it over the little people. Instead, **we must remember what a privilege it is just to serve.** If Jesus, God Almighty in flesh, chose to serve others instead of dominating and imposing His will on them, how much more should we make that same choice? But be warned, the true test of whether you have a servant mentality is how you react when someone treats you like one.

Faithfulness over Talent

Faithfulness is more important than a dazzling show. Your capabilities and intentions do not matter much if you are not dependable to follow through (Colossians 3:23-24). How can a ministry flourish if its leader is hit and miss with attendance, responsibilities, and commitment? How can you be effective if you constantly miss deadlines or produce work that is incomplete or done sloppily at the last minute? At best, this kind of leader frustrates capable team members by hindering what they are doing. At worst, they completely extinguish their flame of desire, rendering them disengaged and ineffective. **Biblical leadership upholds faithfulness as a premium** over intentions, talent or likeability.



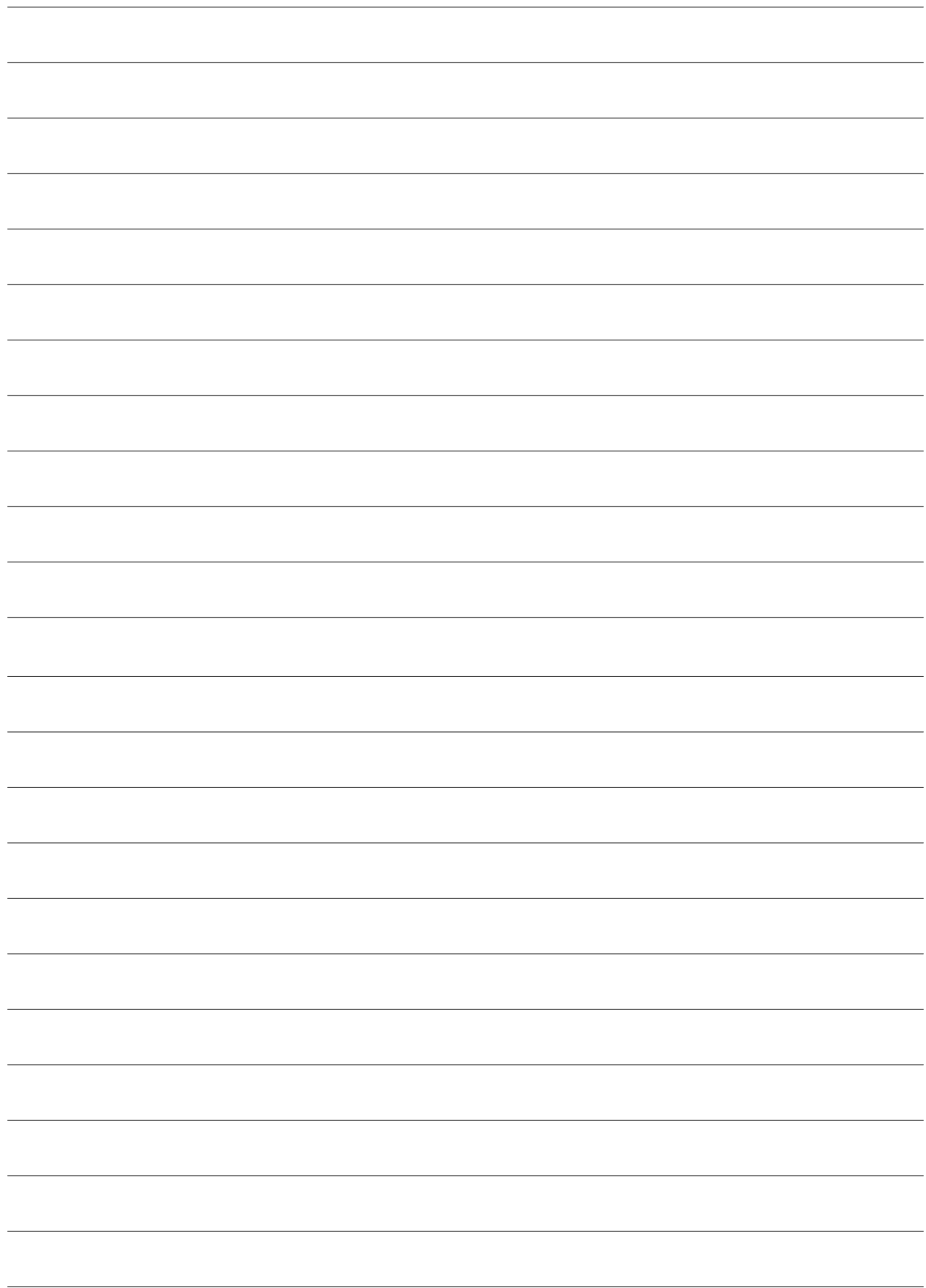
Heart & Passion over Systems & Structures

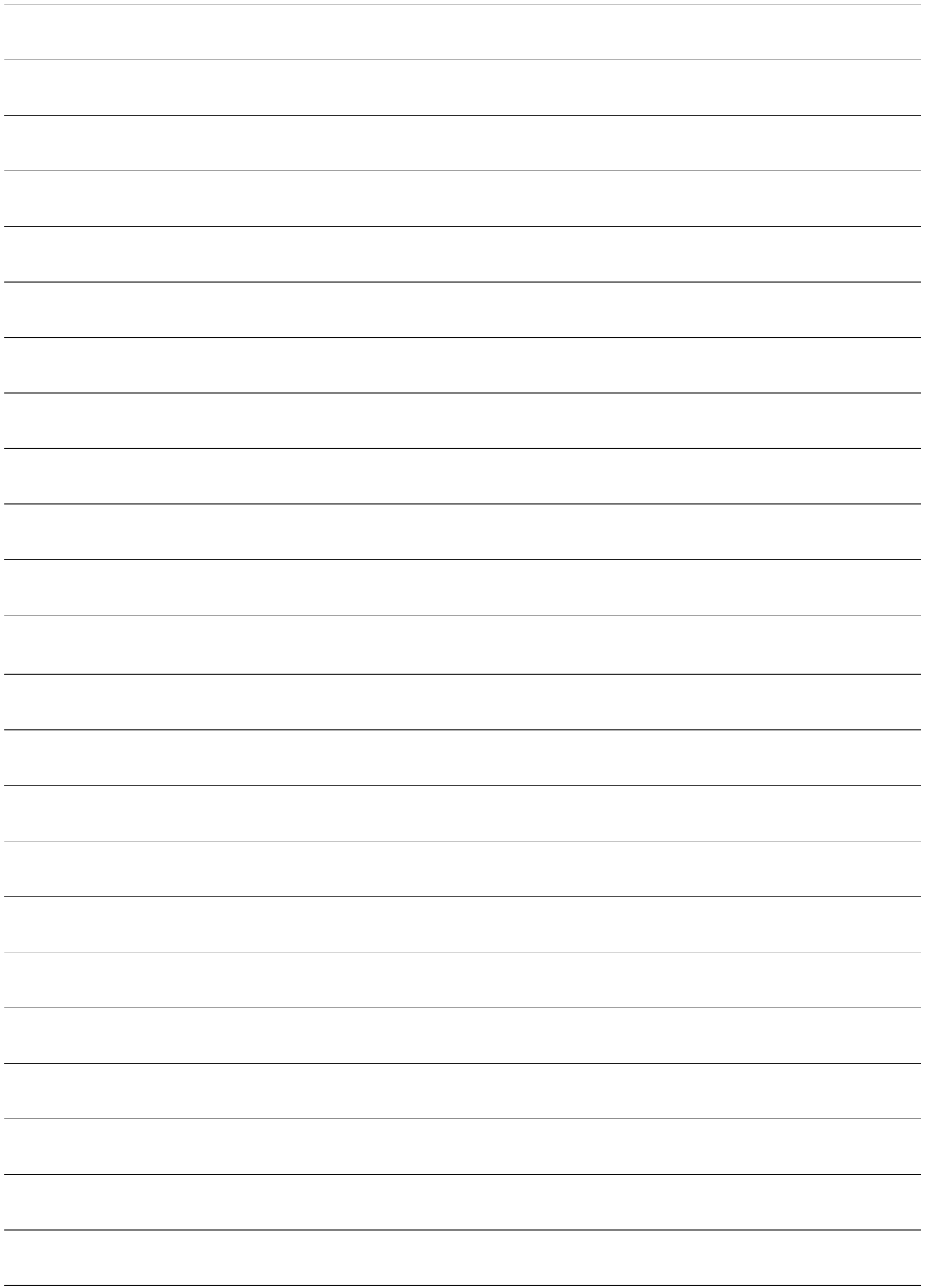
Systems and structures have their place, but heart and passion have to come first. Unlike systems, passion cannot be taught. It arises from within and causes us to pursue the things God has placed within us. Heart causes us to place a priority on people, those we are ministering with and to, rather than organizational structures. The easiest thing leaders do is get things done. The hard part is the people. We are ineffective as leaders if all we do is get things done. **The more important work we do as leaders is invest in people (Luke 10:41-42).** They are much more interested in knowing we care for them than operating in a pristine set of systems and structures.

Luke 10:41-42

But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.

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