



PERFECTLY FLAWED
LEADERSHIP

Thinking Like a Leader

Biblical Wisdom for Developing Your Team

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Why “How You Think” Matters

Leadership behavior flows from leadership thinking. Before you can lead effectively, you must learn to think differently.

Most leaders operate from assumptions they've never examined. They rise through organizations by being competent, solving problems, delivering results, and knowing more than those around them. These habits are rewarded with promotion. But what made you successful as an individual contributor can sabotage you as a leader.

The instinct to jump in and fix things, to be the one with answers, to ensure quality by doing it yourself—these feel like strengths. They feel like leadership. But they often produce teams that are passive, dependent, and underdeveloped. The leader becomes a bottleneck, and the organization's capacity is limited to what one person can carry.

Changing this pattern requires more than new techniques. You can learn delegation frameworks, attend leadership seminars, and read management books—but if your underlying thinking hasn't shifted, you'll revert to old patterns under pressure. When deadlines loom or stakes rise, you'll default to the mindset that shaped you: *"If I want it done right, I need to do it myself."*

This is why Scripture speaks so often about the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2). Transformation begins in how we think. Our mental frameworks determine what we notice, what we value, and what actions feel natural to us.

Consider the difference between these two internal questions:

- *"How do I get this done?"*
- *"How do I develop someone through getting this done?"*

The first question treats the task as the end goal. The second treats the person as the end goal and the task as the vehicle. Both leaders may delegate, but they'll delegate differently. The first delegates to free up their own time. The second delegates to grow someone's capacity. One is efficient. The other is developmental.

This shift doesn't come naturally—especially for high performers. It requires intentionally retraining how you see your role.

You must move from seeing yourself as the **producer** of results to the **developer** of people who produce results. From being the **answer person** to being the one who **asks good questions**. From finding satisfaction in **your own competence** to finding satisfaction in **others' growth**.

This is not merely a leadership philosophy. It's a reflection of how God Himself works. He is not an impatient God who does everything Himself because humans are slow and unreliable. He chooses to work through people—flawed, learning, growing people—because forming them is

part of His purpose. He invites us into His work not because He needs us but because participation in His mission is how we become who He created us to be.

Servant leadership, then, is not just a strategy for organizational effectiveness. It's an alignment with how God develops His people. And it begins with thinking differently about what leadership is for.

The Foundation: Christ's Example

The heart of servant leadership is found in Jesus' own words. In Mark 10:42-45, after James and John requested positions of honor, Jesus contrasted worldly power with His kingdom:

"You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus then demonstrated this in John 13, when He took on the role of the lowest household servant and washed His disciples' feet. Afterward, He was explicit: *"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you"* (v. 15).

This is the paradigm—and it applies whether you lead a church, a department, or a company. Greatness is measured by service, and service often means prioritizing others' growth over your own efficiency.

The Mindset Shift: From Doing to Developing

Here's a tension every capable leader faces: **your competence can become an obstacle to your team's growth.**

When you think, *"I can do this faster myself,"* you may be right. But you're asking the wrong question. Servant leadership asks: **"What does this person or team need from me right now?"**

In a business context, this is the difference between a manager who executes tasks and a leader who builds people. One gets things done. The other builds an organization that gets things done long after they've moved on.

Every time you complete a task that someone on your team could have learned from, you may be solving today's problem while creating tomorrow's bottleneck—and stunting someone's professional development in the process.

Biblical Principles Applied to the Workplace

1. Equip Rather Than Execute

Ephesians 4:11-12 describes the purpose of leadership in the church: God gave leaders *"to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."*

The principle transfers directly to business: your job as a leader is not to do all the work but to prepare your people to do it well.

A manager who handles every difficult client call, solves every complex problem, or makes every key decision isn't leading—they're hoarding. They may feel indispensable, but they've actually made their team dependent and underdeveloped.

In practice: Identify the tasks you do regularly that someone on your team could learn. Create a development plan to transfer those responsibilities over time. Your goal is to work yourself out of your current responsibilities so you can take on new ones—and so your team can grow into theirs.

2. Delegate So the Work Can Be Sustained

In Exodus 18, Moses was personally judging disputes for the people from morning until evening. His father-in-law Jethro observed this and warned him:

"What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone" (vv. 17-18).

Jethro's solution was structural: appoint capable people to handle smaller matters. Moses would handle only the most difficult cases. The reason wasn't just Moses' wellbeing—it was so that *"all these people will go home satisfied"* (v. 23).

This is an ancient case study in organizational design. The leader who does everything becomes a bottleneck. Decisions slow down. The team waits. Customers suffer. And when that leader is absent—through illness, vacation, or departure—the whole system falters.

In practice: Audit your weekly tasks. Which decisions require you specifically? Which could be handled by someone you've trained? Delegation isn't abdication—it's investment. You're building capacity across the team rather than concentrating it in yourself.

3. Invest for Multiplication

Paul's instruction to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2 offers a model of intentional development:

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

Notice the multiplication embedded here: **Paul → Timothy → reliable people → others**. Paul wasn't just training Timothy to be competent; he was training Timothy to train others.

In business terms, this is the difference between training an employee to do a job and developing a leader who can build a team. The first adds one capable person. The second creates exponential capacity.

In practice: When you train someone, include the expectation that they'll eventually train others. Ask your direct reports not just "Can you do this?" but "Could you teach someone else to do this?" Build teaching and mentoring into role expectations and performance reviews.

4. Value Presence and Process, Not Just Output

Jesus spent three years with twelve ordinary men. One could propose with a high degree of confidence that He could have accomplished His earthly ministry far more "efficiently" alone. Instead, He chose a slow process of teaching, correcting, and developing—because forming those men was the mission.

He brought them along to witness His work, debriefed their failures, and sent them out to practice what they'd learned before they felt ready (Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-20). When they made mistakes, He used those moments to teach rather than taking back control.

In business, we often sacrifice development for deadlines. We tell ourselves we'll train people "when things slow down"—but things never slow down. Meanwhile, employees stagnate, disengage, or leave for organizations that will invest in them.

In practice: Build development into the rhythm of work rather than treating it as separate from "real" productivity. Bring team members into meetings where they can observe decision-making. Debrief projects not just for outcomes but for learning. Accept that investing in people takes time—and that time is not wasted.

The Cost and the Payoff

Servant leadership in business requires sacrifice. It means:

- Accepting slower results in the short term for greater capacity in the long term
- Watching someone struggle through a task you could complete in minutes
- Letting go of being the expert, the problem-solver, the indispensable one
- Finding your satisfaction in others' growth rather than your own accomplishments

But the payoff compounds. A team that has been genuinely developed:

- Operates effectively without constant oversight
- Solves problems at lower levels, freeing leadership for higher-level work
- Retains employees who feel invested in and see a path forward
- Maintains continuity when any single person—including you—is absent
- Produces future leaders who will develop others in turn

The organization becomes resilient rather than dependent on a few key individuals.

A Word of Caution

Not every task is a developmental opportunity, and not every moment calls for stepping back. Sometimes the servant leader simply serves by doing what needs to be done—meeting a deadline, handling a crisis, protecting a team member who's overwhelmed.

The wisdom is in discernment: knowing when to act and when to create space for others. Both are forms of service.

Additionally, delegation without support is abandonment, not development. Handing someone a task they're unprepared for and walking away isn't servant leadership—it's negligence. True development includes training, resources, access to you for questions, and appropriate accountability.

Practical Applications

Before Acting, Ask:

1. Is there someone on my team who could do this—or learn to do this—instead of me?
2. Am I doing this because it truly requires me, or because it's faster or feeds my sense of importance?
3. What developmental opportunity might I be taking from someone?
4. How can I use this moment to grow a team member's skills or confidence?
5. What serves this person's career trajectory, not just today's task?

Habits to Cultivate:

- **Bring people along.** When you must handle something yourself, invite a team member to observe. Narrate your thinking so they learn not just what you do but why.
- **Delegate outcomes, not just tasks.** Give people ownership of results, not just instructions to follow. This builds judgment, not just compliance.
- **Entrust before they feel ready.** Growth happens through responsibility. People rise to challenges when given genuine ownership and appropriate support.
- **Debrief mistakes without rescuing.** When someone struggles, resist the urge to take over. Coach them through it. The learning that comes from working through difficulty is more valuable than your quick fix.
- **Tie development to career aspirations.** Understand what each team member wants professionally. Frame new responsibilities as steps toward their goals, not just organizational needs.
- **Celebrate publicly.** When someone steps into new responsibility successfully, acknowledge it in front of others. This reinforces growth and signals to the team that development is valued.

Conclusion

Servant leadership in business is not soft or passive. It requires the discipline to resist doing things yourself, the patience to watch others learn through struggle, and the humility to find your success in their advancement.

The measure of your leadership is not the results you personally produce but the capacity you build in others. It's not what happens when you're in the room but what happens when you're not.

As you lead, keep asking: *"Am I building something that depends on me, or am I developing people who will carry this forward and do the same for others?"*

The servant leader's legacy is not a list of accomplishments. It's a generation of people who lead and serve because someone invested in them.