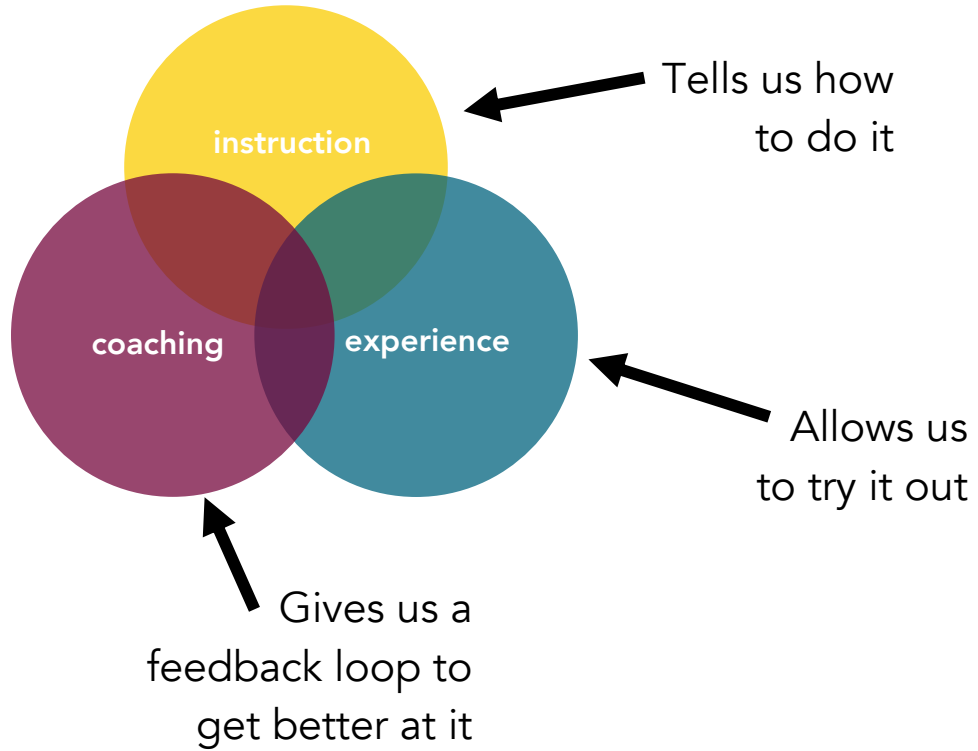


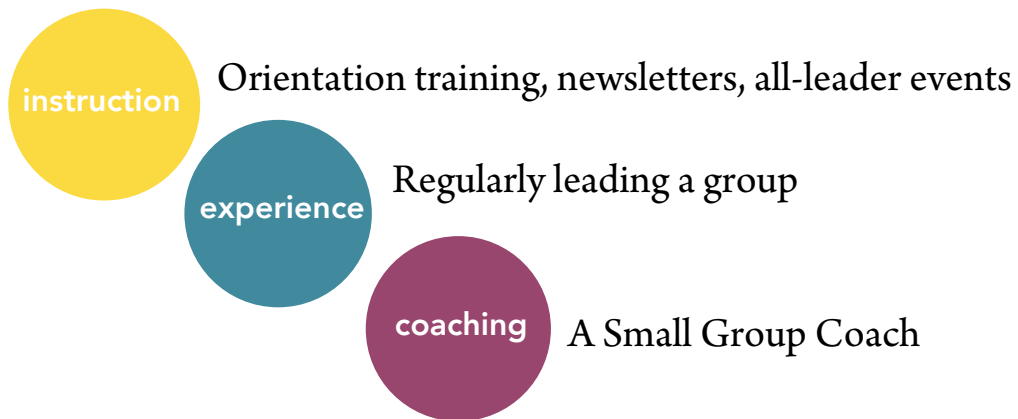
Small Group Leader ***Leadership Skills***

Leaders need to get better.

And they get better most effectively when three components are activated:



That's why Small Group Leaders at College Park experience:



But what are the leadership skills that Small Group Leaders should be developing?

These ten leadership skills help leaders accomplish the Small Group essentials:

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CHRIST-CENTERED FOCUS ON THE WORD

1. **Theological Development:** *knowing the Bible*
2. **Prayer:** *speaking with God*
3. **Discussion-leading:** *facilitating group discussion*
4. **Communication:** *communicating with clarity and relevance*

II

INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE

5. **Soul Care:** *helping apply the Bible to sin and suffering*
6. **Problem-solving:** *finding and fixing problems*
7. **Feedback:** *giving, getting and responding to feedback*

LL

LIVING LIFE TOGETHER

8. **Love:** *welcoming people in*
9. **Consistency:** *showing up and staying the course*

OO

OUTWARD ORIENTED

10. **Goal-setting:** *identifying and achieving what's best*

CC

CHRIST-CENTERED FOCUS ON THE WORD

1. Theological Development: *knowing the Bible*

Leaders need to know their Bible. Those that you lead are gathering so that they can hear God speak to them and apply his words to their lives.

- First, leaders must know the **gospel** and be “preaching the gospel to themselves daily” so that they can keep applying Christ’s work to their own lives and to those they lead.
- Second, leaders should be learning Scripture regularly through **inductive Bible study**: examining a passage for its meaning, then for how to apply it. This can happen through personal study/devotions as well as during group discussion time.

There are also other Bible study approaches that leaders should be aware of and growing in, including:

- **Systematic Theology**: understanding what the Bible speaks about various categories or topics (such as “sin,” “marriage,” or “angels”)
- **Biblical Theology**: realizing that the whole Bible is one story and one authoritative canon, and how to track themes throughout the whole Bible (like how “sacrifice,” “temple,” “rest,” or “God’s people” develop over the course of redemption history)
- **Historical Theology**: knowing what other Christians throughout time have thought about a passage, topic, or theological idea. This is not the most important type of theology (because it focuses on the Christian thinker instead of the text itself), but saints throughout time do help us understand Scripture better (such as Augustine, John Calvin, or A.W. Tozer).

QUESTIONS

- Are you reading God’s Word regularly? What are you learning and applying from your regular personal devotions?
- What questions are popping up from group discussion that you don’t know biblical answers for?
- What resources are helping you grow in thinking biblically right now (Bible passages, books, sermons, blogs, podcasts, etc.)?

RESOURCES

ESV Study Bible Blue Letter Bible The Gospel Coalition Desiring God BibleProject	A Gospel Primer for Christians (Vincent) Gospel Fluency (Vanderstelt) Systematic Theology (Grudem) God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible (Roberts)	Message of the OT: Promises Made (Dever) Message of the NT: Promises Kept (Dever)
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CHRIST-CENTERED FOCUS ON THE WORD

2. Prayer: *speaking with God*

In the words of author Craig Hamilton, “Unfortunately, even though I know and have experienced the power of prayer over and over again, prayer is often the first thing I give up and the last thing I try.”¹ Instead, prayer should be the first thing we go to—in our lives and in our group.

Plan for prayer. If you don’t intentionally reserve time for yourself or during your group gathering, it won’t happen.

Pray by praying. Don’t spend the whole time sharing prayer requests. Make sure your group actually prays: whether that’s by praying immediately after someone shares, having people “share” *by* praying for themselves out loud, or splitting into smaller segments (men, women, or pairs) to have enough time to share and pray.

There are a number of formats for prayer to explore in order to deepen intimacy, communion, and alignment with God:

- **What you’ve discussed:** Have the group pray in response to what you’ve discussed together, thanking the Lord, and asking for help you live it out during the week.
- **Worship-based prayer:** Like College Park’s Worship-Based Prayer nights, first praise God for who he is and thank him for what he’s done. Only after this offer your needs to him. First, seek his face; then seek his hand.
- **A.C.T.S. model:** Engage in Adoration (praise), Confession (our sin), Thanksgiving (for what God’s done), and Supplication (sharing our requests).
- **Confession:** Particularly if you utilize men’s/women’s breakout times for prayer, this can be an opportunity for confession and restoration. Allow people to confess/share their sins from the past week, and then allow another person to extend God’s restoration to them ([1 John 1:8-9](#)) and pray for their restoration and repentance.
- **Pray Scripture:** Use a psalm or one of Paul’s prayers as your words to pray to God (feel free to add your own words).

¹ Craig Hamilton, *Wisdom in Leadership* (Matthias Media, 2015), 43.

- **Lament:** Learn to give to God your pain through lament: Turn, Complain, Ask, Trust.
- **Specific request or person:** Is there a big pressing need in someone's life? Focus prayer on lifting up that person or need.
- **Fasting:** Abstaining from food (for a day, etc.) allows time to express your dependence on the Lord and seek him in prayer.

As leaders, prayer is mandatory. It should be the first thing we do. And it should be something we model throughout our weeks, not just during a gathering.

QUESTIONS

- What do your personal times of prayer look like right now?
- What are you praying about for yourself right now? What are you praying about for others in your life?
- What kind of things are your group members praying about: physical/situation needs or spiritual needs? How can you help them grow in their prayer focus?

RESOURCES

<p>Bible: Psalms</p> <p>"A Complete List of the Apostle Paul's Prayers in the Bible" (Halloran)</p>	<p>CPCSmallGroups.net articles on Prayer</p> <p>"Praying the Bible with Don Whitney: Day 1" (video)</p> <p>Praying the Bible (Whitney)</p>	<p>"The 4 Basics of Lament" (Vroegop)</p> <p>Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy (Vroegop)</p>
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CHRIST-CENTERED FOCUS ON THE WORD

3. Discussion-leading: *facilitating group discussion*

Leading a discussion is much more of an art than a science. It takes situational wisdom, patience, and finesse. But the pay-off is huge. People experience fresh insight, sharp conviction, and real comfort.

Most Small Group discussions are a form of **inductive Bible study** (examining a passage for its meaning, then for how to apply it). The focus of a discussion time should not be just on what the pastor said on the passage or what a book says about a topic but on discerning what the Bible itself says on this topic.

Don't allow your own desire to share content overwhelm the discussion time: you need to lead people toward processing, exploration, and discovery. This is key to how they are going to be transformed. Good discussion leaders often talk least.

Two key sub-skills to Discussion-leading are:

- **Question-asking:** Forming and presenting good questions that get people interacting (avoid “yes/no” and “why” questions). Don't be afraid of 10-20 seconds of silence after you ask a question; give people time to settle in and respond.
- **Active Listening:** Pay attention what people say so that you can have them or others build upon it, take it deeper, or respond to it. Use your face and body language to communicate that you are listening.

QUESTIONS

- What are the biggest hurdles in discussion times right now (e.g.: people not sharing, one person dominating, shallow discussion, etc.)? What are some options you can initiate to help solve these hurdles?
- Have you gotten feedback from your group members on how you can improve your discussion-leading? How can you get this from them effectively?

RESOURCES

"You Only Need These 3 Questions to Lead a Group Discussion" (Bob Martin, CPCResources.net)	"Did You Miss 'Asking Good Questions'" (CPCResources.net)	"What Are We Going to Study?" (Kyle Schulenburg, CPCResources.net)
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CHRIST-CENTERED FOCUS ON THE WORD

4. Communication: *communicating with clarity and relevance*

As a Small Group Leader, you are a communicator. You wear a number of different hats simultaneously, and each of them requires the ability to communicate answers to important questions:

- *Visionary*: What's the vision of the group? Why do you exist? How do I help move this group forward?
- *Planner*: What are we doing? When are we doing it? What are the details?
- *Discussion Leader*: What are we learning together? What's true (versus not true)? How does it apply?
- *Friend*: Am I wanted here? Do we have a close and deepening relationship?
- *Counselor*: Can I share where I'm struggling? What are God's answers for my pain and sin?
- *Problem-solver*: If there's an issue, how will we resolve it?

There are also a number of contexts in which you need to communicate effectively:

- With the entire group at the same time
- 1-on-1
- Encouraging positive behavior
- Confronting bad behavior
- During the gathering
- During the week
- With those you naturally get along with
- With those that you don't

Here are 4 principles to consider when communicating with group members.

Communication should be:

1. **Timely**: so people can respond, honoring their time
2. **Accurate**: true, realistic, honest, biblical
3. **Clear**: to-the-point, understandable, clear actionables if needed
4. **Relational**: including encouragement and personal warmth

QUESTIONS

- On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate yourself as a communicator? Why? What would you need to do to improve?
- What are the situations in which you feel most confident that your communication is being effective? When are you least confident?

RESOURCES

"Better Than Instagram: How To Form Digital Relationships" (Bob Martin, CPCResources.net)	"How Do I Lead the Men In My Group?" (Mark Schuitema, CPCResources.net)	"How Do I Lead the Women In My Group?" (Karen Pourcho, CPCResources.net)
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II INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE

5. Soul Care: *helping apply the Bible to sin and suffering*

Soul care is helping apply the Bible to sin and suffering. This can occur in everyday interactions as well as focused intensive counseling sessions. It involves 4 dynamics:

1. Emotional Intelligence

We need to be aware of ourselves and the other person. Emotional intelligence (which could also be called emotional awareness, “[relational wisdom](#),” or social skills) helps us evaluate:

- How am I feeling?
- How is the other person(s) feeling?

It prevents us from solely operating out of our emotions, or reacting to others emotions, but instead becoming aware of them to thoughtfully act or react with empathy ([Rom. 12:15](#)) and situational wisdom for what is needed in the moment ([Eph. 4:29](#)).

2. Listening

Helping others starts by listening well ([James 1:19](#)). What is the person communicating about their struggle? What do their words (verbals) and body language (non-verbals) communicate? How serious are they about this struggle? What worries them most about it?

3. Question-asking

Question-asking allows you to help the person discover their own heart, God’s will, and how to heal and move forward.

- What do they want to see change (just circumstances, or something within them)?
- What do they see as the underlying concern?
- What are some first steps they think they should take to address it?
- If Jesus were in the room, what would he say to them?

When [asking questions](#), avoid “why” questions. Instead use “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” and “how.”

4. Application of Scripture

We want to faithfully help ourselves and others believe in and follow God's Word in order to turn from sin or heal from suffering. The Bible addresses:

- Depression ([Psalm 88](#))
- Anxiety ([Phil. 4:6-7](#))
- Anger ([Eph. 4:26-27](#))
- Lust ([Eph. 5:3](#))
- Adultery ([Heb. 13:4](#))
- Fear ([Psalm 56:3-4](#))
- Weariness ([Isa. 40:31](#))

But the Bible also displays to us the big picture of God's redemptive plan:

- That God created everything good (including humans to flourish and know him)
- That sin damages everything in our lives (including our desires, relationships, and our relationship with God)
- That Jesus saves our souls and begins our work of life-long personal and relational transformation by his Holy Spirit
- That God will one day bring a New Heavens and New Earth

We need to be careful not to apply Bible verses like band-aids. Instead, we need to patiently apply Scripture in sensitive and relevant ways to where the person is at and where they need to move ahead.

There are situations where these 4 dynamics will uncover that more is needed: specific help from a trained or professional counselor, medication or hospitalization, involvement by government authorities, or additional lifestyle shift dynamics (diet, exercise, etc.).

QUESTIONS

- How willing are you to help a group member if they were to bring up an area of significant sin or suffering? What would you do first?
- What questions would you ask someone who was grieving? What questions would you ask someone who was struggling with anxiety? What Scripture passages would you point them to, and how would you go about doing that (timing, etc.)?
- What would you do if someone shared about a sin that you didn't feel equipped to handle on your own with them?
- What is one area of sin or struggle that you feel personally passionate about or would like to learn more about?

RESOURCES

<p><i>Side by Side</i> (Ed Welch)</p> <p><i>Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands</i> (Paul Tripp)</p> <p>Christian Counseling & Education Foundation (CCEF)</p> <p>Relational Wisdom 360 (led by Ken Sande)</p>	<p>"Levels of Care" (CPCSmallGroups.net)</p> <p>"How Levels of Care Change the Game" (Bob Martin)</p> <p>"Sample Questions for Being Intentionally Invasive" (CPCSmallGroups.net)</p>	<p>"5 Questions about Mental Illness" (David Murray)</p> <p>"How to Respond to Sexual Sin" (Ryan Berg)</p> <p>"Christianity & Depression: Two Myths" (Jeff Ballard)</p> <p>"Did You Miss the Abuse Training Event?" (CPCSmallGroups.net)</p>
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II INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE

6. Problem-solving: *finding and fixing problems*

As a leader, you identify and resolve problems. There are three *wrong* ways you can view a problem²:

1. **As No Problem:** If you think you have no problem, this could be because of pride (and a fear that we'll be seen as contributing to a problem) or because it doesn't look like a problem (it's "not that big of a deal right now"). Be willing to say "Yes, that's a problem."
2. **As The Wrong Problem:** What may seem like a problem with a process (not communicating clearly about the structured time of the gathering) is actually a problem with people (one person consistently talks too long without regard for the time), or what may seem like a spiritual problem ("People don't care about showing up on time! It's not a priority to them!") is actually a logistical problem (hard to find parking in your neighborhood). Identify the problem correctly.
3. **A Hopeless Problem:** Problems can shock or disappoint us. But they shouldn't overwhelm us ([2 Cor. 4:8](#)). When you face a big or complex problem, pray, think it through, ask for outside perspective, and do your best to resolve it. Be aware that there are always some things that we won't be able to control. But we can always make a change in the areas we can control.

So, how should we view a problem? As an opportunity to be a redemptive agent in our area of leadership. Take [these four steps](#) to address problems (these often happen with your Coach):

- Identify the problem
- Note the reality of why this is a problem
- Evaluate options (more than one!)
- Commit to being willing to taking the next step

² I am indebted to Craig Hamilton's *Wisdom in Leadership* pp.153-158 (Matthias Media, 2015) for this summary of three views on problems.

Then, be willing to circle back again with yourself and/or your Coach to evaluate again what the next step will be after that.

Conflict Resolution:

One important sub-skill under problem-solving is conflict resolution: resolving relational conflicts. Interpersonal conflicts happen frequently in community, and we need to be ready to step in to address others who are in direct conflict with us or to step into to mediate conflict between two other parties.

QUESTIONS

- Do you feel like you are quick or slow to identify and address problems? What contributes to that quickness/slowness (what makes you want to move at that pace)?
- What is one problem you see right now in your group? It doesn't have to be "big." It just has to be something that could be better.
- If you were to ask the group members, what would they say is one problem in the group right now?
- Who in your group is the most helpful for helping you diagnose problems? Why? (Are they the one causing issues? Are they vocal about problems? Are they close to you?)

RESOURCES

<p><i>Crucial Conversations</i> (Kerry Patterson)</p> <p>"Video Review for Crucial Conversations by Kerry Patterson" (Callibrain) (video)</p>	<p><i>The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide for Resolving Personal Conflict</i> (Ken Sande)</p> <p>"Biblical Peacemaking - Breathing Grace in the Midst of Conflict" (Ken Sande)</p>	<p>"Coaching Using the G.R.O.W. Model" (CPCSmallGroups.net)</p>
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INTENTIONALLY INVASIVE

7. Feedback: giving, getting and responding to feedback

If you're a leader, then people will criticize you. However, the best leaders don't just wait for criticism (or encouragement): they invite it. Why? Because we get better through feedback.

Don't train your group members not to communicate criticism or feedback directly to you; ask them for it. Otherwise, they'll share it with everyone but you.

Leaders should be getting clear feedback from their group at least once a year to know:

1. Whether they should change anything in their format or culture as a group
2. Whether they should continue as a group (or add more people or multiply/branch into a new group)
3. What the leader should do to improve

We must also give various kinds of feedback while always being patient ([1 Thess. 5:14](#)).

Receiving feedback:

- **Ask for feedback:** Make people feel safe, and explicitly ask for feedback often
- **It's usually not personal:** Most feedback is about an issue, not about you personally (even if it feels that way). So focus on changing the issue, not feeling hurt.
- **When it is personal, ask forgiveness:** If you sinned against someone, ask their forgiveness and repent from that attitude/behavior/habit
- **Praise and criticism should be weighed, not counted³:** It doesn't matter the number of the encouragers or critics; what matters is whether they are trustworthy, knowledgeable, and/or are speaking what is true

³ "[W]hen you find people who are insightful or can be counted on to always tell it like it is, good or bad, you'll want to give more weight to their opinions. Or when someone offers you feedback on a topic that is within her area of expertise, you will probably give more weight to her thoughts than you would to the opinion of someone with no knowledge in that area. ... Both praise and criticism should be weighed instead of counted." Craig Hamilton, *Wisdom in Leadership* (Matthias Media, 2015), 132.

- **Ask more questions:** It's okay to find out more about the nature of a "problem" someone is bringing up. Asking more about it allows you to move toward the best and most precise solution.
- **Be willing to change, or at least try:** Outside feedback should help you try things differently, even if it's for a season

Questions to ask for Feedback:

1. What went well? What can I/we do better next time?
2. What's one thing that I can do better to lead our group? (Really!)
3. What's one thing you see in our group that could go better? What could that look like if it was better?

Giving Feedback:

- **Encourage frequently:** help them do "more and more" of what they're doing right ([1 Thess. 4:9-10](#))
- **Observation + Reason + Permission + Critique + Response:**
 - **Observation:** "Margaret, I noticed at our last gathering that you had a lot to share about your cat. And from what I saw, I think we had less time for others to talk."
 - **Reason:** "It's important that everyone in our group has enough time to talk, especially about their spiritual lives."
 - **Permission:** "So can I share with you a way that I think you could do to help us make this happen?"
 - **Critique:** "I think if you shared less about your pets during the actual discussion time (and perhaps did that during our meal time or after the meeting), that would allow us to hear more from you and others in the group about how we're doing spiritually and interact about the passage."
 - **Response:** "Do you agree with that feedback? What do you think?"
- **Issue-Focused & Solution-Oriented:**
 - When giving people criticism, be specific. Focus on the issue that is to be solved or improved, not on the person (as if something is wrong with them or that they are "all wrong").
 - Make your critique truly "constructive criticism" by focusing on the solution. Answer "What do we want to see?", not just "What did you do wrong?"
- **"Compliment Sandwich" Pros & Cons:** Particularly when communicating in writing (e.g.: email), it can be helpful to start by thanking/encouraging the person,

include your critique, then end with thanking/encouraging them again. However, this shouldn't be insincere, formulaic, or [manipulative](#).

- **Be timely:** You can defer a bit if your emotions are running high, but don't put it off till too late. Deal with your emotions ([Eph. 4:26](#)), but also deal with the situation.

QUESTIONS

- How often do you *give* some sort of feedback to those in your group? What does this look like?
- How often do you *receive* feedback from those in your group? What does this look like?
- When do you think it's time to get more feedback about your leadership? Who would you like to ask (your Coach, certain group members, your spouse, the whole group)?

RESOURCES

<p>"Communications Review" (Faith Church, Lafayette, Indiana): A summary of the "Four Rules of Communication" from Eph. 4:25-32</p>	<p>"Kim Scott on How To Give Candid Feedback" (Video)</p> <p>"How To Give Constructive Criticism: 6 Helpful Tips" (Celestine Chua)</p>	<p>"The 'Sandwich Approach' Undermines Your Feedback" (Roger Schwarz, Harvard Business Review)</p>
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LL LIVING LIFE TOGETHER

8. Love: *welcoming people in*

It may seem unusual to call love a “leadership skill.” But it is. People know when you care for them. And they are well-led when they are well-cared-for.

Of course love is not just a tool to maximize leadership influence:

- It is the “new commandment” of Jesus for his saints ([John 13:34-35](#))
- And it is part of the second “greatest” commandment of God’s law ([Matt. 22:39](#))

Love is central to the life of every Christian, but no less for the life of Christian leaders.

In his article “[The Marks of a Spiritual Leader](#),” John Piper summarizes a spiritual leader this way:

I define spiritual leadership as knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power ...

Therefore, the goal of spiritual leadership is that people come to know God and to glorify him in all that they do. Spiritual leadership is aimed not so much at directing people as it is at changing people. If we would be the kind of leaders we ought to be, we must make it our aim to develop persons rather than dictate plans. You can get people to do what you want, but if they don’t change in their heart, you have not led them spiritually. You have not taken them to where God wants them to be.⁴

Love is one of the marks of this “spiritual leader.” How can we attain a love that’s strong enough to love both others (both friends and enemies)?

[Colossians 1:4-5](#) says, “We heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.”

In other words, when our hope is strong, we are freed from fears and cares that prevent the free exercises of love. Therefore, a spiritual leader must be a person who has strong confidence in the sovereign goodness of God to work everything together for his good. Otherwise, he will

⁴ John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” January 1, 1995, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader> (accessed February 22, 2021).

inevitably fall into the trap of manipulating circumstances and exploiting people in order to secure for himself a happy future which he is not certain God will provide.⁵

We must center ourselves in a deep and abiding faith in God and hope in his promises: this will free us up to love others without manipulation them or idolizing them.

How do we love?

1. Love for a long time (perseverance; [1 Pet. 4:8](#))
2. Love through failures (forgiveness; [1 Pet. 4:8](#))
3. Love the new person (hospitality; [1 Pet. 4:9](#))
4. Love by using my gifts faithfully and encouraging them to use their gifts faithfully (serving; [1 Pet. 4:10-12](#))
5. Love through understanding (empathy; [Rom. 12:15](#))
6. Love by modeling peacemaking (reconciliation; [Rom. 12:18](#))

These aspects of our love should continue to deepen as we mature in spiritual leadership. Ultimately, we are called to lead like Jesus by loving others like Jesus would and fostering a community who loves each other like Jesus ([Phil. 2:1-11](#)). After all, our love is how the watching world will know that we follow him ([John 13:35](#)).

QUESTIONS

- On a scale from 1-10 how much do you feel like you are actively loving your group members right now? Why?
- Who in your group is the easiest to love? The hardest to love? Why?
- Do the people in your group know you love them? Have you ever told them? What have you done to show them?

RESOURCES

<p>"The Marks of a Spiritual Leader" (John Piper, Desiring God)</p>	<p>"104. Love's Model [The Invitation to Love 2]" (The Paul Tripp Podcast)</p>	
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⁵ Ibid.

LL
LIVING LIFE TOGETHER

9. Consistency: *showing up and staying the course*

Leaders can't lead if they are not present.

This may seem obvious, but when you stretch it out over months and years, this principle applies to lots of scenarios:

- Are you present on time for meetings?
- Are you present with eye contact in conversations?
- Are you present when a group member is trying to call or text you during the week?
- Are you present after gatherings to talk more with those who need it?

Like parenting, *quantity* time leads to *quality* time. Out of the large amount of “quantity” time spent with those you lead will come “quality” moments that may be life-changing.

Your job as the leader is to make sure that you have consistency. You get to model being present and available to those in your group so that they know that they have someone to go to who cares for them and isn't going to pull away when things get tough. Consistency shows up in:

- What time you show up to group gatherings (or if you skip gatherings)
- If you follow through with what you commit to
- How you pursue or avoid communicating with some (or all) of the members of the group
- If people feel they rely on you
- How regularly you engage your spiritual disciplines and what kind of spiritual habits you model
- What kinds of conversations people expect to have with you (sports? TV shows? Spiritual life?)
- How you react when others are wrestling with sin or grief

Consistency is character and engagement over time. And faithfulness to others certainly echoes the character of our God whose “steadfast love endures forever” ([Ps. 136](#)).

QUESTIONS

- Do you feel like you are “fully present” and attentive to others during group gatherings? What are ways you can express this to others?
- When are you most tempted to pull away from group commitments or people in the group? What do you think makes pulling away tempting to you?
- What is one way that you can engage your group members intentionally this week to let them know that they can count on you?

RESOURCES

<p>“The Secret to Self-Discipline” (John Bloom, Desiring God)</p>	<p>“Consistent Spiritual Discipline is Not Legalism” (John Piper, Desiring God)</p>	
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OUTWARD ORIENTED

10. Goal-setting: *identifying and achieving what's best*

If you are a leader, you've got to have goals. Otherwise, where are you leading people?

Goals can be:

1. **Goals to achieve:** a proactive vision you want to see happen
2. **Problems to solve:** a reactive issue you want to see resolved

The best conversations with Coaches are the conversations that start with goals. You should be able to answer the question:

- “What is a goal that I have right now or a problem that I would like to see fixed?”

Then you and your Coach can walk through which of your goals is most pressing and what options you think are best for starting to address it.

The four stage “G.R.O.W.” model can help you establish and accomplish goals for yourself or your group⁶:

1. **GOAL:** What is a goal you have right now? (Having more people talk during discussion? Seeing a marriage reconcile? Connecting with members mid-week?)
2. **REALITY:** What's the current reality that makes you think this is important right now?
3. **OPTIONS:** What are some options (more than one) for how you can get there?
4. **WILLINGNESS:** Which of these options is the best to start with, and are you really willing to do it this month?

Whether your desired future is about the relationships between group members, their spiritual growth, the group's living on mission, or multiplying the group into two groups—you as the leader get to help guide the group into the future. After all:

⁶ This concept is from Tony Stoltzfus's helpful book [Leadership Coaching](#) and the [CBMC](#) Leadership Coach Training. They credit John Whitmore's book [Coaching for Performance](#) as the origin of the model.

Leadership is about having an idea of what you think the future should look like and then trying to move people from where they are presently to where you think they should be.⁷

QUESTIONS

- What is one problem you see in your leadership or group right now? How would you like to see this be different?
- What is one proactive goal that you'd like to be true of your group in the near future? What's four potential ways you could start helping the group get there?

RESOURCES

<p>"Coaching Using the G.R.O.W. Model" (CPCSmallGroups.net)</p>	<p>"Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals" (CPCSmallGroups.net)</p>	<p>"The Three Levels of Small-Group Problems" (Heather Zempel, SmallGroups.com)</p>
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⁷ Craig Hamilton, *Wisdom in Leadership* (Matthias Media, 2015), 338.