

What's Your Plan?

What Qualifies a Person to be a Leader in a HEALTHY Church?

The answer is quite simple ...

You must keep your personal life in order (not just anyone can be a leader in a *healthy church*)

The Principle of Influence says ...

You can only impart to others what's true in your own life (what's in the *head* is in the *body*)

Here are three excellent leadership verses ...

1 Corinthians 11:1 – *Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ
Imitate me as I imitate Christ (we must lead by example)*

Philippians 4:9 – *Whatever you have learned, received, or heard from me – whatever you have seen in me
Put these things into practice & the God of peace will be with you*

Luke 6:40 – *A student is not above his teacher, but when fully trained, becomes like his teacher*

If those who follow your lead & serve under you become like you ...
Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Do they also become like Jesus?

I want to highlight one uncommon verse & encourage you to memorize it & apply it to your life ...

Psalm 20:4 – *May God grant you the DESIRES of your heart & make all your PLANS succeed*

If you *desire* to be a good pastor ... husband / wife ... father / mother ... leader ... Christian – **What's Your Plan?**

**Nobody ever planned to be poor, fat, lazy, unemployed or lonely
Those are the things that can happen when you DON'T have a plan**

As a COACH, I often work with my clients on what I refer to as **Funderburk's Fundamentals**

These fundamentals are not legalism; rather, they set a high biblical standard for all leaders (they must be administered with grace)

Romans 8:1 – *There is no condemnation (general) for those who are in Christ Jesus
However, there may be conviction (specific)*

Today, we'll focus on four fundamentals ...

Faith, Family, Finances & Freedom

1. FAITH

Outside of moral failure or financial impropriety ... the most disheartening confession I hear from pastors:
"The only time I open my Bible these days is when I am preparing my next sermon" (too busy, no margin)

I don't care how smart you are – you have no wisdom apart from God's Word
People don't want your opinion – they want to hear *from God through* you
Can I suggest that – like Jesus – you start your day with God – **Mark 1:35**

Do you (still) have a consistent daily QUIET TIME where you study the scriptures & pray?

If you're too busy to spend time with God, you're busier than God intends for you to be
You likely have too much on your plate – you may need to make some adjustments to your schedule
Only do what only you can do – don't do anything another staff member or volunteer can do – learn to delegate

Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to produce His FRUIT in your life?

It is not enough to pray in tongues – some of the meanest people I know have a prayer language ☺

Galatians 5:22-23 – *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self-control*

Almost every time I sin – with a little reflection – I can identify the specific expression of the fruit of the Spirit that was missing in my life

No one ever planned ... to enter ministry & grow cold in his / her relationship with God ... to experience burnout ... to get so busy doing ministry that he / she failed to spend time with God – Those are the things that can happen when you DON'T have a plan

2. FAMILY

Is your marriage HEALTHY? (not OK, tolerable, adequate)

Most men would say "everything is fine" if they didn't have an argument on the way to this event
Better question: Would your spouse agree?

Do you have regular COMMUNICATION with your spouse?

Do you have CONVERSATIONS about subjects other than your church or your church members?

Again: Would your spouse agree? Mine surprised me

Our first year at Gateway (2003) we grew from 1500 to over 5000

During that year I was a terrible husband & an absent father

The most painful words I've ever heard Bethani say: Gateway Church is the mistress I've always feared (2004)

We escaped on a family vacation to Christian Las Vegas (Branson)

Tub Time was born (Hercules) – great playlist on my iPhone

Bethani: *“Boys, if you walk through that door ... you'll pay for your own therapy”*

Action steps for husbands:

Do the opposite of what comes naturally to you

Take long walks together

Schedule date nights

Pursue her heart – not her body

Do your children RESPECT & OBEY you?

Do they have REBELLIOUS behaviors that require your attention?

Let me make a CONFESSION: If allowed, I'd likely spank & discipline other people's children – possibly even your children 😊

I simply don't understand “time out” – **Proverbs 13:24** says *“spare the rod & spoil the child”*

We should never spank or discipline in anger – but we must make sure we get their attention – consequence is a great teacher

Is your family a PRIORITY over ... Work? Hobbies? Ministry?

Does your calendar agree with your answer? Would your family agree?

1 Timothy 3:5 – *If you can't manage your own family well, how then can you take care of (lead) God's church?*

No one ever planned ... to get married & fall “out of love” ... to just be roommates raising kids together ... to get a divorce ... to grow distant from his / her children – Those are the things that can happen when you DON'T have a plan

Ben Franklin quoted Poor Richard's Almanac ...

The road to hell is paved with “good intentions” – so is the road to divorce court & fractured families

3. FINANCES

The theme of the entire Bible is GIVING – the most famous verse in the Bible ... **John 3:16** *For God so loved ... that he gave*

One of the most God-like things you can do is to GIVE
I believe you should be one of the most generous people in your church
No one in your church should have greater buy in than you

We all know to TITHE ... returning the first 10% of everything you receive back to God
The healthiest churches I know require their leaders to tithe & many have a process in place to check & make sure they tithe
Let me meddle: Are you leading by example in this area? Are you giving Generously & Sacrificially?

IF so, I have some advice for you ...

Before you meet with someone who has a complaint – I suggest you check his/her giving record
Here's why: Your greatest complainers are often not *invested*

Matthew 6:21 – *Where your **treasure** is, there your **heart** will be also (heart follows treasure)*

Here's what you want to know BEFORE you agree to meet with someone:
Does your church have their heart? *(that's the easy question)*
Does their giving record confirm or contradict that answer?

Confirms: You may want to make time for them – they may actually have some helpful advice or feedback for you
Contradicts: You may want to respectfully decline their request & *invest* your time in those who are *investing* in your church

IF you lead by example & give generously ... &

IF you lovingly challenge your people to do the same ...

You'll NEVER lack for anything as a church

You'll ALWAYS have the resources needed to fund the vision that God has given you

No one ever planned to be stingy ... faithless ... or in debt
Those are the things that can happen when you DON'T have a plan

4. FREEDOM

According to Isaiah 61 & Luke 4 ... Jesus came to save us, to heal us, & to set us free

Have you experienced everything that Jesus died to make available to you?

Remember: You can only impart to others what's true in your own life

I'm saddened by the growing number of Christian leaders who fall ([some morally, others financially](#))

Too many pastors & leaders are losing their reputations – some are losing their marriages & families

A pastor recently said to me: *"I'm convinced that I will ALWAYS struggle with this particular sin in my life"*

That's simply not true – Please don't believe a lie that you will always struggle with a specific sin

John 8:36 – So **IF** the Son ([Jesus](#)) liberates you, **THEN** you are ([completely/unquestionably](#)) **FREE** ([you are free indeed](#))

2 Corinthians 3:17 – *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*

Are you living a life of freedom?

[Would your spouse/family/co-workers agree?](#)

It is possible for all of us to live a life of complete & total FREEDOM

I can identify three significant encounters with God that have powerfully impacted my life ...

As a confused college student who was stacking a number of bad decisions ... I was born again at age 21 (1982)

As a newly married pastor who was hungry for the presence of God ... I was baptized with the Holy Spirit at age 29 (1990)

Without question, the greatest behavioral change in my life took place when I was 43 (2004)

I experienced **inner healing** that led to **freedom** from raging anger ([began with sexual abuse at age 5](#))

Today ... as a result of experiencing salvation, emotional healing & freedom ([the ministries of Jesus](#))

I'm living a clean, pure, holy life before the Lord – What I'm describing is available to all of us

IF we – as pastors & leaders – are saved, healed & set free ... **THEN** we can impart these ministries of Jesus to the people we serve

No one ever planned ... to be angry ... to be insecure ... to be in bondage ... to struggle with addiction

Those are the things that can happen when you DON'T have a plan

Here are three other fundamentals that didn't make today's list ...

FRIENDSHIPS – find a *family* ... *mine is ARC* ... we're better together

Do you have someone in your life (*other than your spouse*)

With whom you can share everything? Even the ugly stuff?

Have you given someone permission to point out your blind spots?

FUN – it's OK to laugh – to relax & enjoy life – to find a hobby

my wife put the FUN in FUNderburk

she says my job is to put the FUND

FITNESS – while it's true that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, He may not need as much room as some of you have made for Him ☺

Joshua 14:10-11 – Caleb was as strong at 85 as he was at 40 – not an accident ... that was intentional ... Caleb had a plan

No one ever planned ... to be overweight ... to eat poorly ... to have a heart attack ... or to die young
Those are the things that can happen when you DON'T have a plan

Be wise – exercise – eat well – get plenty of rest – think future

Psalms 20:4 – May God grant you the DESIRES of your heart & make all your PLANS succeed

Three responses by churches to the recent Bill Hybels news:

OVER-reaction ... could lead to too much board control – which could lead to misery for you ... & your staff

UNDER-reaction ... just choose to ignore & disregard the issue altogether – this may set you up for your own moral failure

BALANCED-reaction ... ask yourself honest questions & make the necessary adjustments so that you finish well the race you are running

I encourage you to ...

Use common sense – never alone (*not as common as it used to be*)

Exercise wisdom (*avoid anything that could possibly lead to sexual sin*)

Remember ...

That “success & power” often precede sexual sin

That “accountability” is essential – not optional

That “absolute power” corrupts absolutely

Questions for every pastor to answer ...

Am I teachable? To whom am I truly accountable?

Who has permission to ask me hard questions?

Who can confront / admonish / correct me?

Governance & Accountability ...

Is it possible for your “employees” & / or your “friends” to give you completely honest feedback?

Can they actually question your choices & your leadership decisions without risking their jobs or their seats at the table?

Wisdom says you need both local & translocal accountability

If you have three overseers – it might be wise to have a ...

prophet (direct, candid, forthright)

priest (compassionate, empathetic, pastoral)

king (structured, administrative, organized)

You will need & benefit from each one of these types of leaders at various seasons of your ministry life

Recommended books ...

Model Man - Larry Stockstill

Replenish - Lance Witt

What kind of old man do you want to be?

I want to be Happy, Healthy, & Holy

Matthew 16:26

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world & lose his own soul?

What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself?

Ask the Lord to “reset your soul” & help you to be fully present with your spouse / family / friends

CONCLUSION

Why are all these things so important?

Within your region / sphere of influence ...

- There are couples who have determined that divorce is the only option
- There are children crying themselves to sleep each night while mom & dad are fighting
- There are people experiencing various forms of abuse (physical, emotional, verbal, sexual)
- There are people who have unexpectedly lost their jobs
- There are people who have received frightening medical reports
- There are people suffering from depression and hopelessness

Promise: If you HELP people ... God will send MORE people ... because God LOVES people

Question: Why would God send you more people if you aren't prepared to help them?

Psalm 20:4 — *May God grant you the DESIRES of your heart & make all your PLANS succeed*

What is the primary desire ... the dream ... that is in your heart? **God wants to make your dream come true**

What is your plan ... what measurable steps are in place ... to accomplish that desire / dream?

If you want your church to be a healthy / growing / life-giving / community impacting church

You must have relevant & practical ministries in place to help people experience everything Jesus died to make available to them

If you want to be a healthy & influential pastor & leader

You must keep your personal life in order & lead by example

If you hope to accomplish either of those

You must have a PLAN