

Professional Perspectives for Christian Senior Officers

The **Role** of a Christian Senior Officer

Two of the most powerful roles of a leader are serving as a mentor or teacher, and as an encourager. It is equally important and productive in spiritual warfare. Paul was deliberately chosen and equipped by God to be a teacher, encourager, and exhorter. Like Peter, Paul's natural attributes served him in a powerful way. Before Damascus, Paul was *driven* to action. After Damascus, he was *called* to action. A look at 2 Timothy reveals several distinct principles of how Paul saw the role of a leader, both secular and spiritual.

Leadership occurs in the context of relationships.

2 Timothy 1:1-2 Key relationships are God as Father, Christ as Lord, Paul's relationship with Christ, and Paul's teaching, mentoring relationship with his dear "son" Timothy.

2 Timothy 1:3 These relationships are strengthened by a constant remembrance in prayer.

2 Timothy 1:4 They are marked by a deep love for one another that is expressed in joy and in tears.

2 Timothy 1:5 They are strengthened by personal knowledge and understanding of each other's faith.

A spirit of boldness and recognition of God's power, love, and discipline are required for leadership.

2 Timothy 1:7 Boldness, power and discipline are familiar words to the military. How easy is it to be timid, weak, or uncontrolled in the *spiritual* dimensions of your professional leadership?

The leader cannot call a follower to go beyond where he himself has been.

2 Timothy 1:8 A key phrase here is "join with me." A leader will not be effective in calling someone to a level of service or sacrifice beyond that at which he is serving. This is true also in a spiritual sense.

Leadership requires sacrifice.

2 Timothy 1:8, 12 Paul identifies suffering as a real possibility for a Christian leader. This could be the choice to deny yourself by giving up time or by setting priorities that keep you from leisure pursuits that you enjoy. It may come from others in the form of jealousy, ridicule, or a satanic attack. A leader and his family are exposed. Some Christians have been called by God to give up life itself in the service of His kingdom.

Entrust your leadership and life to Christ.

2 Timothy 1:12 God is your shield and strength. He is able to guard you, your family and those you lead until the battle is done. Those who live in this way will hear His greetings, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things" (Matthew 25:21).

Guard what God has entrusted to you—your leadership, rank, and position.

2 Timothy 1:14 Paul's admonition to Timothy to guard that which God has entrusted to him means that his call is important. Seniority and leadership can become corrupt if they aren't guarded well.

Leadership requires strength.

2 Timothy 2:1 It requires not the mere strength of our own might, but strength in the grace that is in Christ. In Joshua chapter 1, God gives this military commander special leadership instructions. We find the admonition to "be strong and courageous" three times (verses 6, 7, 9). Then the people add this same expectation of Joshua as their leader (verse 18). God knows humans need special strength and courage to be leaders for Him.

Select and teach reliable men and expect them to be productive.

2 Timothy 2:2 There are four generations of leaders in this verse: (1) Paul, who taught (2) Timothy, who is to select and teach (3) reliable and capable men, who will, in turn, teach (4) others. In the military we understand this concept. You should be involved in reproducing new spiritual generations. As a senior leader, you must be selective in choosing those whom you mentor, both professionally and spiritually, and invest your life into them.

Leadership requires endurance.

2 Timothy 2:3 A soldier understands soldiering. It is a hard life at times, requiring sacrifice, hardship, and perseverance. Who should understand soldiering for Christ better than someone who serves in the military?

Be unentangled.

2 Timothy 2:4 What entangles a leader, in either the professional military or in spiritual life? It is that which turns your focus away from the principal task of leading and distracts you with extraneous things. (A military deception plan seeks to accomplish this in the minds of the enemy commanders.) The world will set before you many other priorities. If they don't help you accomplish God's purposes for you, they can lead you and those who follow you off track. You must set and sustain clear and concrete priorities, both professional and spiritual.

Leaders compete according to the rules.

2 Timothy 2:5 You may strongly disagree with the written or unwritten rules of the groups to which you have made commitments. When this occurs, you should attempt within the institution to change those rules. If you can't do so, you may face the decision of whether to remove yourself from leadership, or from the institution. In responding to such situations, you will be judged in two ways, on the basis of the facts and on the basis of perceptions. Even though a perception may be wrong, it appears as truth in the mind of the perceiver, until it is changed. A senior officer clearly understands the professional implications of this principle.

Leaders give credit where it is due.

2 Timothy 2:6 You may have worked for a senior, possibly a professing Christian, whose ego was so dominant that all organizational accomplishments were expressed as his or her personal achievements. It is so easy in senior positions to assume the credit due to others, professionally and spiritually.

Reflect on God's Word.

2 Timothy 2:7 Paul overlays his teaching to Timothy by telling him to return repeatedly to his instructions, asking for God's insight. Senior military officers should operate on the basis of principle, not a fixed formula. So it is with God's Word. Application of His instructions requires prayerful reflection and prayer for godly insight.

Leaders exist to serve others.

2 Timothy 2:10 The purpose of senior military leadership is to accomplish assigned missions by making subordinates successful, without seeking self-aggrandizement. The true value of professional and spiritual leadership will be judged by its effects upon those being led.

Be instructive and constructive, not destructive.

2 Timothy 2:14-26 Quarreling and foolish arguments are counterproductive. Tearing down another person does nothing to build your credibility. Instruction and construction require more diligence and skill than destruction. God's truth is the rule and guide for that which is to be taught and for how we are to relate to others.

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2 Timothy 1:1-5

2 Timothy 1:7

2 Timothy 1:8

2 Timothy 1:8, 12

2 Timothy 1:12

2 Timothy 1:14

2 Timothy 2:1

2 Timothy 2:2

2 Timothy 2:3

2 Timothy 2:4

2 Timothy 2:5

2 Timothy 2:6

2 Timothy 2:7

2 Timothy 2:10

2 Timothy 2:14-26