

# THE BIG 5

FIVE TRACKS FOR INCREASED  
**IMPACT IN BOTH THE CHURCH**  
AND THE WORKPLACE.

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**Christ wants to use you to make a salt and light impact – both in the church and in the workplace. And there is a way you can increase this impact. That's what this document will show you.**

**It has always been God's plan to take Christfollowers and use them to bring out the God-flavours in a sin-rotten world...**

**Matthew 5:13** (Jesus said to his followers) "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

**And to bring out the God-colours in a sin-darkened world...**

**Matthew 5:14** "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

**This call of Christ is nothing less than a call to impact. Let's answer four questions about this impact...**

**What is meant by impact?**

By impact we mean that your life influences, leads, touches, blesses, benefits and changes other lives. By 'impact' I also mean 'leadership'.

**What comes to your mind at the use of the word 'leadership'?**

Perhaps you think of the person who has the badge, or has the title, or who sits in the biggest office. Then you're thinking of positional leadership. But positional leadership is just one kind of leadership. The other more important kind of leadership can simply be defined

as 'impact' or 'influence'. You don't need a badge or title or office to influence or impact someone. In this sense we're all leaders. We all have some kind of influence or impact on at least a few other people. We're not necessarily good leaders, but we lead others in some way.

**Where do we get to make this kind of salt-and-light impact?**

Everywhere we go, to be sure. But in Common Ground we emphasise two critical spheres:

- ① Christ wants us to be salt and light in the workplace. This is where we spend the majority of our lives, and the various sectors we work in are the very engines for the shaping of our city's culture. If we don't make a difference for Christ in the workplace, we don't make a difference for Christ in the city.
- ② Christ wants us to be salt and light in the church. Ultimately it's not meetings and messages that change people. Christ uses people to change people, even in the church. That's why he seeks to use Christfollowers to influence, impact and lead others in and through the church. There's no other way our church will become all it can become.

**How do we increase our impact?**

Thousands of books have been written on the subject. This document seeks to reveal the most irreducible 'tracks' that will help you move forward to a life of increased impact. As we reflected on Scripture and our collective learnings as a church, we arrived at five insights. We call these five insights '**The Big Five**'...

# 1 LEAD MYSELF BETTER

If I want to lead others better, I need to lead myself better.

This is probably the most important truth about influencing, leading and impacting others. So many times when we try lead or impact better, we put all our energy into trying to lead and impact others better. But, if we're wise, we should put our first energies into better leading our own lives.

Listen to the story of 1 Samuel 30 which beautifully illustrates this...

3 When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. 4 So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. 5 David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 6 David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters.

David, the future king of Israel, is a young emerging leader at the time. He is just learning to lead his troops into battle. He's green. But God is pouring his favour on David, and most of the time the battles go his way. One terrible day though, that pattern changes. After returning home from fighting yet another enemy, David and his men discover soldiers have attacked and destroyed their camp-

site, dragged off the women and children, and burned all their belongings. This would define "bad day" for any leader! But it's not over. His soldiers are tired, angry, and worried sick about their families. They're miffed at God. A faction of his men spreads word that they've had it with David's leadership. They figure it's all David's fault, and they decide to stone him to death. In this crisis David's leadership is severely tested. Suddenly, he has to decide who needs leadership the most. His soldiers? The officers? The faction? His answer? None of the above...

**But David found strength in the LORD his God. ...**

8 David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?" "Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue."

In this critical moment he realizes a foundational truth: he has to lead himself before he can lead anybody else. Unless he is squared away internally he has nothing to offer his team. So "David strengthened himself in the Lord his God" (v6). He leads himself to God. And once he finds strength in God, he seeks guidance from God. God gives him faith-building direction. Only then does he lead his team to rescue their families and what's left of their belongings. David understood the importance of self-leadership. He led himself before trying to lead his men. And this was the reason that he was able to lead his men.

**How to lead yourself better. There are at least three ways:**

**① Don't be hijacked by strong negative emotions.**

This story of David is one of a man experiencing a hurricane of negative emotion – bitterness, grief, guilt, discouragement, anger, self-condemnation and accusation. When the average person experiences these emotions, they tend to seriously consider quitting or fighting or running away. In that moment, noble things as godly character, humility, patience, sticking to my values are forgotten. We go into panic mode and feel that something must be done right NOW. In reality all vision is blurred. An emotional hijacking is underway.

The best thing to do is what David did. Feel your emotions, but do not hand over the reigns to them. Maintain emotional self-control. And don't decide or do or say anything compulsive. Like David, lead yourself to God. Wait until such time as your emotions calm, and you can sense Christ's strength again. And see his perspective on the matter.

Daniel Goleman, the author of the best-selling book, Emotional Intelligence, has analyzed why some leaders develop to their fullest potential and why most hit a plateau far from their full potential. His conclusion? The difference is (you guessed it) self-leadership. He calls it "emotional self-control." What characterizes maximised leadership potential, according to Goleman? Tenaciously staying in leadership despite overwhelming opposition or discouragement. Staying in the leadership game and maintaining sober-mindedness during times of crisis. Keeping ego at bay. Staying focused on the mission instead of being distracted by someone else's agenda. All these indicate high levels of emotional self-control. Goleman says, "Exceptional leaders distinguish themselves because of superior self-leadership."

Self-leadership involves not being hijacked by negative emotions that come our way. And this applies both in the workplace and in the life of the church! Apart from emotional self-control, we cannot grow our salt and light impact in these spheres.

**② Resist the temptations related to money, sex and power.**

The temptations related to money are two-fold: greed and dishonesty. Jesus taught that if we cannot be trusted in the area of money we're not trustworthy as agents of impact in his kingdom. Generosity counters greed. And accountability and disciplined honesty counters dishonesty.

For the temptations related to sex and power, consider David once again. If the first half of David's life records his rise as a leader, the second half records his fall as a leader! And the reason for his failure as a leader? It was a failure in self-leadership!

For one, he failed to withstand sexual temptation. David destroyed his integrity, and ultimately his family through the sexual sin, in his case the sin of adultery. This single sin became was the first crack that led to others sins that eventually split his kingdom in two. In the same way, sexual sin will destroy your ability to impact others for Christ. Think also of the story of Samson. He had supernatural strength from God. And he was seduced by a woman. But what is the motive of this seductress? The answer is the demise of his God-given strength. Still today, Satan seduces us into sexual sin because he is after our strength, our ability to impact and influence others for Christ! Sexual sin takes the salt and light right out of you. Sexual purity is an essential aspect of self-leadership.

**The temptation related to power is pride.**

David fell here too. 1 Chronicles 21 records David being incited by the devil to revel in his kingdom as though it belonged to him not to God. The 'benefit' of this for David? A short-lived moment of the euphoria of glorying in his own power. The cost for David and his kingdom? The judgment of God and the death of 70,000 men! One sin of pride in the secrecy of a man's heart led to the public death of 70,000 men! That's because pride comes before the fall! It's still the same with us. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

**Without humility we cannot impact others. What is humility?**

It is repentance from pride. None of us can ever say, 'I am com-

pletely humble.’ The best we can say is, ‘I am busy repenting of pride. All the gifts and talents and success and wealth I have belongs to God and comes from God. Though I am grateful for this trust, it is not mine to revel in. The glory goes to him.’

If we are to make a lasting impact for Christ, we need to re-surrender our lives to God daily. Sins such as greed, sexual impurity and pride drain the light and the salt out of us. Perhaps we can pray this old song as our own prayer: ‘Holy Spirit, take control. Take my body, mind, and soul. Put a finger on anything that doesn’t please you, Anything that grieves you. Holy Spirit, take control.’

### ③ Embrace the disciplines of self-replenishment.

Leadership and impact means that we’re giving out. It means there is an outflow. But we cannot sustain this outflow without building into our life rhythms of inflow. One of the most helpful maxims in the area of self-leadership is this: **if your outflow exceeds your inflow, the shortfall will lead to your downfall.**

Jesus was the master of self-leadership! Read the first chapters of Mark’s Gospel. Notice Jesus’ pattern of intense ministry quickly followed by time set aside for rest, reflection, prayer, fasting, and solitude. That pattern is repeated throughout his ministry. Jesus was practicing the art of self-replenishment, which is essential to self-leadership. He would go to a quiet place and recalibrate. He would remind himself who he was and how much the Father loved him. Even Jesus needed to invest regularly in replenishing himself physically, emotionally and spiritually. This was the secret to keeping his calling clear, avoiding mission drift, and keeping distraction and temptation at bay.

Think of how damaging poor self-leadership in this area is to our leadership of others! For example, a top Christian leader disqualified himself from ministry through sexual sin. A published article revealed that the sexual sin came a long way down the road of his poor self-leadership: “He sank like a rock, beat up, burned out, angry and depressed, no good to himself and no good to the people he loved.” When this pastor finally wrote publicly about his experience,

he said, “Eventually I couldn’t even sleep at night. Another wave of broken lives would come to shore at the church, and I found I didn’t have enough compassion for them any more. And inside I became angry, angry, angry. Many people still wonder whatever happened to me. They think I had a crisis of faith. The fact is I simply collapsed on the inside.” He failed the self-leadership test. His outflow exceeded his inflow and eventually the shortfall led to his downfall. He should have regrouped, reflected, recalibrated, and sought help. Goleman would say that this guy lost his emotional self-control. Now he’s out of the game. And plenty of lives are damaged for it.

**The lesson for us:** take out time to get rest, to reflect, to spend time in God’s Word, to exercise, to sleep well – and of course to get help from trusted people. Of all these disciplines of self-replenishment, surely the most foundational one is to daily take time to reflectively read God’s Word. This daily encounter with the Scriptures has the power to help you hear God speaking anew to you, and to deepen your understanding of the good news of Jesus Christ.

In the same way a car can’t run on empty, so we can’t impact and lead and influence others on empty. We need to self-replenish. We need to re-fuel emotionally, spiritually and physically. Parents, take note. Business leaders, take note. Pastors and small group leaders and ministry leaders, take note. Anyone who wants to grow their impact for Christ, take note – embrace the disciplines of self-replenishment!

Honest leaders will tell you that – whether at work, or in the church – by far the hardest person to lead is themselves. It’s constant, hard work. But it’s worth every ounce of energy! If we fail to lead ourselves well, we will fail to lead anyone else well too!

# FOLLOW OTHERS BETTER



If I want to lead better, I need to follow others better.

Jesus was a follower before he was a leader. Jesus launched his ministry by getting baptized by John. What was happening here? Other than showing us all our need to be baptized, he was demonstrating this very point about followership: before he started his own ministry, he submitted to the ministry of John the Baptist.

Do you know the words Jesus used when he called his 12 disciples?

‘Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ (Matthew 4:19)

See that? He’s inviting them into a life of impact upon others. But what is the pathway they must walk if they are to get to that life of impact? Answer: a life of followership. And it’s still the same today. Jesus invites us into a life of impacting others, but he makes it clear up front that this will involve follower-ship.

Nowadays there is so much emphasis on leadership. We are urged to become good leaders. And we can read books and attend seminars about how to become good leaders. But we overlook a simple insight – that Christ calls us to follower-ship before he calls us to leadership. Here are two examples of the call to follower-ship, both from **Hebrews 13...**

**Verse 7:** Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to

you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. **Verse 17:** Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

**See that? The Bible calls us to be good followers. Followers who:**

- ① Learn from our leaders
- ② Entrust ourselves to our leaders
- ③ Co-operate with our leaders
- ④ Support and encourage our leaders, thereby making their work a pleasure not a pain.

**Where do we follow?**

- ① **We need to be good followers in the place of work.**

Who has positional authority over us? Well, we should do all we can to learn from them, entrust ourselves to them, co-operate with them, support and encourage them. Answer this question: Who, in the world of work, do you follow?

- ② **We need to be good followers in the church.**

We entrust and submit ourselves to the team of pastors who oversee our congregation. We entrust and submit ourselves to the small group leaders and ministry leaders that the pastors have put in place. We work with those in leadership already. Who, in the world of church, do you follow? Is it the pastors? Your small group leader? Your ministry leader?



## Why is followership the pathway to impact?

### ① The average team of people requires more followers than leaders.

Generally it's groups and teams of people, not just individuals, who make an impact in the world. This is true in homes, in churches and in the workplace. These teams will need one or two leaders. But these leaders need more team-members if they are to get anything meaningful done. Now if everyone wants to be the leader, who will be the team of people that partner with the leader in making the impact? When no one is concerned with who gets the credit, it's amazing how much can be accomplished. PJ Smythe, leader of God First Church says this, 'I am made to make a difference. Whether that means following another leader, or leading followers I don't mind. Just don't make me sit around directionless. That's stressful. Let's get working together.'

### ② It's as we follow that we learn to lead.

By following other leaders we get front row seats on someone else who is leading. Think of Peter the apostle. Though he was a mere fisherman, yet in three years he was leading the top revolution of history: the explosion of Christfollowing into the world. What happened in those three years to prepare him for this task? Answer: by following Jesus, he was learning to lead. We might ask, 'But what if you follow a leader who gets it wrong?' We can learn from a leader like this too – if we are clever – we can learn from their mistakes, and make sure we don't repeat the unwise things ways of leading of others that we ourselves endured under a clumsy leader.

### ③ It makes us a conduit of higher authority.

In Matthew 8:9 the centurion who oversaw a 100 soldiers could say, 'I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this

one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.'" Where did he get his authority from? The answer is that he was under authority. He could appeal to higher authority, which flowed through him precisely because he was submitted to this higher authority himself.

### ③ It gives us credibility.

The person who is on his own mission – under no one else's authority – generally can't be trusted, because who can vouch for such a person? But when we are good followers, those we follow and those we team with can vouch for our credibility. Without this credibility – no matter how gifted we may be – we will probably not get much opportunity to make meaningful impact anyway.

## What do good followers do?

### ① The wings of their leaders.

Do your leaders in the church, and in the workplace feel your support? Do you actively get behind them, ensuring they succeed? Do you pray for them? Do you encourage them? Do you let them lead you? Do you tactfully share constructive feedback that will set them up to succeed? Or do you backchat them? Do you undermine them in gossip? Do you foster attitudes of cynicism toward them? Do you passively watch them, suspecting – maybe even hoping – they may fail? Do you withhold helpful insights that might take their leadership to the next level?

### ② Team Players.

There are solo-sports such as tennis, golf and surfing. Then there are team sports such as rugby, soccer and cricket. When it comes to followership the lessons learnt in the solo-sport mindset are not so helpful, but the lessons learnt in team-sports are directly ap-

plicable. For a simple reason: followers tend to find themselves surrounded with other followers. We need to learn to respect and appreciate each other, encourage and support each other, and collaborate and co-operate with each other. When we take this approach we discover the power of **TEAM**: which stands for **'Together Everyone Achieves More.'**

### ③ Invite feedback.

The very best followers from time to time approach their leaders and say, 'I'm working at being a valued team-player on your team. But I am aware I have blind-spots. Would you mind giving me some feedback about the part I play in this team, so that I would be even more valuable to you and this team?' It takes courage to get this feedback, but it's courage that pays off big time. When a follower asks for this kind of feedback it massively boosts their trustworthiness in the sight of the leader.

### ④ Find their significance and affirmation in God.

One of the reasons so many people want to be a leader is that people are hungry for affirmation and significance, and believe that leading will become a source of affirmation and significance. Conversely, followers often feel they forfeit the significance and affirmation that leaders get – and for this reason they struggle to be a follower. Insecurity ruins their ability to follow.

We know of no real solution to this insecurity that runs through the human heart other than the solution the gospel of Jesus brings. As human beings we seem to be wired to seek affirmation and significance. But we make a big mistake when we try find this primarily in people rather than in God.

**When we look to people for this, it manifests in a few ways:**

① **We're insecure and anxious.** When we hinge our identity and worth upon the opinion of others, we have a strong desire to

prove ourselves in the eyes of others. When we do this, times of success will draw their praise, but times of failure will cause them to withhold their praise, perhaps even shaming us. Whoever we give the power to validate us, we also inevitably give the power to invalidate us. This fear of failure leads to anxiety. And everyone knows that bouts of failure will eventually come their way.

② **We yearn for promotion.** Believing our worth is connected to the height we climb on the so-called 'ladder of success' we can't bear the thought of someone else climbing higher than us. We dread being unrecognized and overlooked. We can't bear it when others are promoted and we are not.

③ **We are exhausted.** What an exhausting performance treadmill we get on! And some of us live our whole lives on that treadmill – always trying to prove ourselves, always looking for promotion – all because we draw our affirmation and significance from people.

What the gospel does is that it shrinks our concern for human opinion about us, and correctly focuses on God's view of us. It wonderfully helps us find our affirmation and significance in God. We come to the place where we realize that we can't prove ourselves to God. But rather he proves himself to us – by loving us to death, by drawing us into his family where he loves us unconditionally as a son or daughter – and there he gives us all the affirmation and significance we could hope for. So now we start to do our best and impact others not because we need their affirmation, but precisely because we already have God's!

Just think of Jesus' example in this security in the Father's love. Before Jesus started his public ministry, the Father poured out his affection on Jesus and said these words: 'This is my Son, whom I love, with whom I am pleased.' Do you see that it's not at the end of Jesus' ministry that he hears these words? Rather it's at the



beginning of his ministry. Jesus doesn't do his ministry because he's trying to earn his Father's affirmation and love, but because he already has it!

Not only that, the gospel - when understood and absorbed into the core of our being - brings us to the place of trusting God to promote us for the sake of serving others, but we relax in his timing and ways. We relinquish our tendency to push doors open. Christ holds the keys to our promotions. We don't need to promote ourselves, because at the right time and in the right way he will promote us! Now that's the power of the gospel - a gospel that makes us good followers.



# 3 EMBRACE RESPONSIBILITY

If I want to grow my leadership, I need to embrace responsibility.

There are two kinds of responsibilities that God brings our way.

- ① **We may need to be responsible for tasks.** In the church this could be as simple as being on welcome duty, or charity-clothing-assortment, or playing in the worship band. In the workplace it might be as simple as having lock-up duty, or completing my tax return on time, or organizing an event, or exploring a new horizon of possible expansion for the business.
- ② **We may need to be responsible for people.** In the church this could be leading a small group of people, leading a ministry, leading some children or teenagers, or being a leader of Common Good team of people. In the workplace it might be supervising or managing a team, or being CEO.

Today there is a widespread aversion to and avoidance of responsibility in our culture. We're commitment-phobic. Back in the day it seems, to be entrusted with responsibility was a high honour, a sign that you've come of age. Committing to look after a task or some people was a sign of maturity, an opportunity to make a significant contribution. But nowadays the goal of life for many people is freedom from any responsibilities that might cramp their style or limit your options.

Yet Christ's leadership flies in the face of this. For example, in Matthew 25 Jesus tells a parable of a master who gives three servants

a responsibility. To one he gives five bags of gold. To another two bags. To another one bag. They are to invest it. The guy with five bags of gold and the guy with two bags of gold take their responsibility really seriously and manage to double the amount through disciplined investment. The guy with one bag doesn't take his responsibility seriously and instead buries his gold in the ground. When the master comes back, he rebukes the guy who didn't take responsibility, but praises and promotes the guys who did take responsibility with these revealing words...

'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share in your master's happiness.' (repeated in verses 21 and 23).

### **There are five benefits of embracing responsibility, according to Christ...**

#### **① Embracing responsibility grows our character.**

The master says, 'Well done, good...' The word 'good' speaks of character. In contrast the guy who buries his gold is called 'evil' by the master. Carrying the weight of responsibility for meaningful tasks and for other people's lives develops our character! No weight, no growth. Mark Driscoll, leader of Mars Hill Church, said out of his observation of South African young men that his biggest concern was the way our culture extends the adolescence of these young men by letting them live responsibility-free lives right through their twenties. He said that the secret to the amount of strong male leaders he has helped raise up in his own church is treat them like a truck. His words: 'A truck without a load is far more inclined to swerve this way or that, but if you want it to drive straight, put a load on it.' A load of responsibility has the potential to bring out the best in us, and to grow us.

#### **② Embracing responsibility practices our servant-heartedness.**

The master says, 'Well done, good and faithful servant...' Christ redefines leadership. Leadership is normally defined as the rise to power. The greatest leader, by this definition, has the most people serving them. But Christ challenges that and redefines true leadership as the descent to servant-hood. The greatest leader, by this definition, serves the most people.

#### **③ Embracing responsibility shows our faithfulness.**

The master says, 'Well done, good and faithful. You have been faithful with a few things.' Are you a faithful person? There is only one way to show it. It is to be given a trust or a responsibility and to look after that trust and responsibility. If we always avoid responsibility then we have not yet a chance to reveal faithfulness, and thus credibility.

#### **④ Embracing responsibility grows our capacity.**

The master says, 'You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.' The bigger our responsibility, the bigger shoulders we need. But none of us start off with big shoulders. We grow them over time. If the weight of an experienced leader is put upon a brand new leader they would be crushed. The key is a steady, progressive growth in capacity for responsibility. That's why it's important we see our current responsibilities as slowly but surely growing our capacity for future responsibilities. On this note, embracing responsibility also tends to lead to promotion. The master promotes the servants who have been faithful, and have increased their capacity. In the same way we tend to be promoted over time as long as we continue to be faithful and to grow our capacity.

#### **④ Embracing responsibility leads to joy.**

The master says, 'Come and share in your master's happiness.' This is an important point, because we're all aware of how carrying responsibility can weigh us down and wear us out - especially if

we exercise poor self-leadership in the area of self-replenishment. But Jesus emphasizes that the growth of responsibility is meant to lead to the growth of joy! The more we carry, the more reason we have for joy when we see whatever or whoever it is thriving as a result.

Do you embrace responsibility in the church, and in the workplace? Some of us think we're too young. But there's no better way to mature than to start small in the tasks and the responsibilities we're embracing. Some of us think you're too old. Have you ever done a biblical study on the word 'retire-ment'? Here's what you'll discover. Nothing! The Bible doesn't teach it. The only thing you'll find – especially in the examples of Moses and Caleb – is the idea of re-fire-ment, where you don't fade out, but rather re-fire yourself to make meaningful contributions as salt and light. Some of us think we're too busy. If we're busy being salt and light – in our home, church, and workplace, then fantastic. We need to honour our limitations. But if a self-audit reveals that in fact we're too busy doing stuff that doesn't meaningfully impact others as salt and light, then let's rather re-evaluate our priorities, re-align ourselves with the kingdom of Christ, and make all the courageous decisions we need to make to re-locate our time and energy around more meaningful stuff.

One last tiny bit of advice on this point: embrace responsibility along the lines of your giftedness, talents and strengths. Find out the way God has wired you as a person, and then embrace responsibility and tasks that line up with that gifting. Are you good at hosting people? Then host people. Are you good at organizing events? Then organize events. Are you good at background tasks? Then serve in background tasks. Are you good at strategizing? Then strategize. Are you good at creating? Then create. Are you good at dealing with money? Then deal with money. This does not mean we never serve beyond areas of gifting, but it does mean we're strategic about the long-term responsibilities we carry.

# 4 GET EQUIPPED

**If I want to grow my leadership, I must sharpen my competencies.**

One of striking things about Jesus is just how competent he was in his ministry. He was highly competent in knowledge. He knew the Scriptures back-to-front. He was highly competent in communication. He had the ability to hold the captivated attention of 1000s of people of all ages and stages for days on end. He was highly competent in organization. On several occasions we find Jesus organizing journeys to navigate, places to stay, meals to have and people to see – not only for himself, but for his whole itinerant team. He was highly competent in relational dynamics. Jesus had an uncanny ability to penetrate the hearts of both enemies and friends around dinner tables through probing conversation. He was highly competent in leadership. He skillfully led a team of people, not to mention that he pioneered the world's largest ever movement of people. And here's what makes all this competency so remarkable: he was only 30 years old!

**Where did Jesus get this competency?**

**① Jesus got his competency as he drew on the resources of the empowering Spirit.**

In this sense his competencies were supernatural. We could call this 'the unfair advantage' – the privilege of being led by the Spirit who knows all, sees all, and can do all; the Spirit who is committed to leading us to the place of maximum impact. On this note, Christ bestows upon all his followers the very same Spirit. And we are to

learn to draw on the resources of the empowering Spirit, who leads us to the place of maximum impact.

### **In 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, the Apostle Paul says this so well:**

‘Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.’

It’s obvious how this applies to ministry in the context of the church, but what about leadership and influence in the place of work? Ask any mature Spirit-filled believer who has sought to be salt and light in the place of work and they will tell you of numerous times when the Spirit was their unfair advantage: highlighting to them both opportunities and dangers, as well as wisdom to navigate their way forward. The take-away point here is that the quality of our walk with Christ, and our prayerful day by day dependency on the Spirit is key to increasing our impact, leadership and influence.

### **② Jesus grew his competency through sharpening and developing himself.**

In this sense his competencies were natural. As a young boy he intentionally sharpened his competencies and knowledge and skills.

**Luke 2:52 says:** ‘Jesus grew in stature (that’s physical growth) and wisdom (that’s intellectual growth), and in favour with God (that’s spiritual growth) and in favour with people (that’s social growth).’

From the earliest age we see him intentionally sharpening himself! As a young boy Jesus would have read and perhaps memorized **Ecclesiastes 10:10:** If the ax is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success.

It is quite possible Jesus pondered this verse, because he was a carpenter by trade who worked with an ax. Picture two ax-men in a forest. Both are instructed to cut down as many trees as possible. But one is given a blunt ax. The other a sharp one. Who cuts down

the most trees in a day? Obviously the guy with the sharp ax. The only way the guy with the blunt ax could cut down as many trees is to work four times as hard! This verse teaches us that we don’t always have to work harder. Very often we just need to work sharper.

The very best thing the guy with the blunt ax could do is to take out some time to sharpen his ax. Such a simple insight. But how often we overlook it. If you are going to grow your impact, your influence and leadership you need to sharpen your competencies!

### **6 natural ways to sharpen our competencies**

[ They apply both in the church and in the workplace...]

#### **① Select and learn from role models and leading practitioners.**

Find the people who are brilliant at what it is you feel called to do, and learn all you can from observing and studying their example. If they’re written stuff, read it.

#### **② Watch, read and listen to equipping resources.**

In every sphere of activity in both the church and in the workplace there are a proliferation of resources to be found by the person that seeks to track them down. These resources may include key books, DVDs, blogs, websites, mp3s and more. Tip to finding them: ask your role models what they read, watch and listen to – and this will give you a head-start.

#### **③ Attend live equipping events and courses.**

In the church for example, if you want to be a small group leader, attend small group leaders training. Or when we have special leadership training events, carve out the time in advance to make sure you get there. Similarly, in your sphere of work, find those events and courses that will take your game to the next level.

- ④ Find a coach who can evaluate your current level of skill, and suggest ideas where you can sharpen your ax. If they cost, be willing to pay.

Get '360 degree feedback'. Steven Covey coined this. It means that we – every now and then – ask everyone in our sphere: leaders, peers, followers, clients, customers etc – for feedback. We say, 'I really want to grow in this role. But I need your perspective to do so. Can you please tell me what I am doing right, and give me ideas about what I could do better.'

- ⑤ Develop people skills.

Life and impact is all about people. That's why we should learn to relate to people more skillfully.

- ⑥ Learn to manage conflict.

If there's one skill not enough of us have in South Africa it's this: the ability to relate to all kinds of people – different ages and different cultures. Grow your relational range.

# RAISE OTHERS UP

5

If I want to grow my leadership, I must empower others to do what I now do.

In this church, do you know the main difference between a good volunteer and a great one? And the difference between a good leader and a great one? A good volunteer is someone who gets the job done. A great volunteer is someone who draws others in and equips them to also get the job done. Similarly, a good leader leads some people well. But a great leader draws others in and equips them to also lead.

Isn't this the one thing that makes Jesus such a great leader? He didn't just do the work – he multiplied his impact and leadership by raising up other workers and leaders.

In Matthew 9:35-10:4 we see this illustrated graphically...

9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

Can you see how Jesus is doing the work? He's teaching. He's proclaiming. He's healing.

9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

**Can you see why Jesus is doing the work?** He does it because he cares. And still today Christ's eyes rove the entire planet – and he sees people like sheep without shepherds. The crisis is a lack of competent, caring leadership.

9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

**Can you see the emphasis of Jesus' work here?** It was the multiplication of leaders and workers. The entire world are harassed and helpless sheep without a shepherd. The entire world is a harvest about to be wasted. But what is needed? Shepherd leaders. Harvest workers. Notice that he tells every worker to pray to God for more workers, and every shepherd to pray to God for more shepherds.

10:1 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

**Can you see the multiplication of Jesus' work?** He himself worked to multiply himself. That's what makes Jesus a great leader. He carefully selected some people – you could call them apprentices or disciples – and then he raised them up. So that by the time he returned to the Father he left some fantastic leaders to lead the infant church.

This clarifies the challenge of every leader and volunteer in the church. It also applies to leaders in those companies and sectors where more leaders are required to promote or sustain growth.

**Here's the challenge: don't just do the work you're doing; raise others up to do it too. Don't just lead. Multiply yourself into other leaders. That's the difference between good and great!**

We live in a city with a near-wasted harvest. We live in a city with multitudes of shepherd-less sheep. And Jesus and told us and showed us what we are to do – we are to multiply ourselves. We're not just talking about finding people who can help us do tasks more effectively. Nor preparing people to simply replace us so we can move on to something else (though that is essential). We're talking about a leadership and volunteerism that is reproductive in nature – so the city will be filled with workers and shepherds – for the sake of this generation, and for the sake of future generations.

Let's make this practical. Take a moment to think of some responsibilities you carry – at both work and in the church. Now think of someone in your sphere of influence who you are currently developing, or someone you would like to develop as a leader or volunteer. Let's call this person Mary. What would it look like to raise Mary up?

Modelling ourselves after the way Jesus raised up his disciples to be leaders, we find **six phases to raise up workers and leaders...**

**Phase 1:** I do. I ask Mary to consider doing. Soon after I start doing something – whether it is volunteering or leading – I say to Mary: 'Mary, the work that we get to do is so important. It impacts lives. I believe you've got what it takes to do. Would you be willing to let me train you up too?' If they say 'yes' this leads to the next five phases...

**Phase 2:** I do. Mary watches. We talk. As a more experienced leader leads, Mary takes time to observe me. Within a few days the two of us discuss what Mary has observed. This debriefing conversation includes three simple questions: What worked? What didn't work? And how can we improve?



**Phase 3:** I do. Mary helps. We talk. In this phase of development, I give Mary an opportunity to help lead in a particular area. For example, if Mary is being developed to lead a small group, I might ask Mary to lead the conversation while I lead the prayer time. Or if I am a doctor, I let the Mark do the diagnosis. Or if I am doing a presentation, I let Mary do part of the presentation. Again, this experience should be followed up with a one-on-one to talk.

**Phase 4:** Mary does. I help. We talk. Now Mary transitions from supporting or helping me to taking on most of the leadership responsibilities of the team or group. If for example Mary is being trained to lead a team of sound technicians, she will operate the sound system and provide leadership for the other sound technicians. I begin releasing more and more responsibilities to her. We still meet meet regularly to debrief the experience.

**Phase 5:** Mary does. I observe. We talk. Mary grows increasingly more confident in his or her role. Consider how this step might look in Kids Rock ministry. A Kids Rock group leader, at this point, would give Mary the opportunity to fulfill all the functions of leadership, with me looking on and watching the new leader in action.

**Phase 6:** Mary does. Mary asks John to consider doing. This is where the process of reproducing comes full circle. I have multiplied myself into another. This process of effectively raising others up might sound technical, but it can quickly become intuitive. And it is something all of us can do! In fact it's the difference between good and great!

