LEADERSHIP TRAINING STARTS IN THE FAMILY

We are to keep and guard this Garden that GOD placed us in
We live in a world where the norms and standards of yesteryear have been discarded. Not everything that comes from the past is great, but the transition from one generation to the next, due to the lack of Biblical foundations in a COMMUNITY, cause the following generation to accept a lowering of standards.

The concept of success due to attributes such as hard work, perseverance and diligence have been replaced in the next generation with a concept called “entitlement” … we want because we are!!

We can draw a parallel with the rebuilding of the city walls in the time of Nehemiah.

Wherever compromise to a Biblical standard is allowed in one generation, you will find that that becomes the next generation’s high point, unless severe action is taken.

Keep in mind: we are talking about a believer-community that is set-apart from a much bigger world system.

We can see their norms, just as they can see ours.

As soon as we compromise, the world will recognise the new standard and seek to influence even more.

The image of a family man / woman, is someone who is building on the family structure (the walls of the city), while at the same time they guard with the sword (to make sure that unwanted values do not enter in).
It is safe to say that very few people have a conceptual, Biblical family model that they try to apply.

On the other hand, humanistic models abound and are taught at every university. While some of these techniques have a place in society because they are not connected in a holistic Biblical model, they often function as plasters that cover a wound, instead of a scalpel that cleans out the wound.

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However, whilst we can list these “to do” things, nothing will really work out according to GOD’s plan unless we accept that we must accept and live according to GOD’s Leadership model, we MUST become SERVANT LEADERS.

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**Background**

We read the Bible every week and study the story and the content with a passion to get to know GOD better.

- Paul tells us that the Bible has lessons for our everyday life.
- As priests in the Living Stone Tabernacle, we are to reveal the Glory of GOD by the everyday actions that we model in the community.
- This calls for Sons / Daughters of Abraham to:
  - Have a clear vision of our purpose
  - Have a clear understanding of our place in the Body of Messiah
Have a sound value system that causes us to strive for justice, compassion and humility.

Paul tells us that we must study the lives of the fathers of our faith so that we can follow those role-models where they reveal GODLY leadership.

Our misunderstood pattern of leadership, the world system

The world system is a powerful change agent. The world, in its pursuit of power, money, and so forth, has worked hard to formulate the very best model of 'management' to achieve the outstanding results.

This model with its hierarchical structure (the boss / general / dictator), its rigid discipline (rules of the game), and it continual focus on performance (being the best / first / champion), works very well in the business / political world.

Unfortunately, very little of what we see can be matched to a Biblical model. Essentially, the Biblical model refers back to the title of “father”.

We are to be a father to the family, an overseer of the family clan, and a “prince” of the tribe.

These dynamics of family, in principle, have the same goal of the world system, to subdue the earth by taking dominion; the main difference is found in the overall classification:

- In the world system, we want to be successful
- In the Biblical system, we want to be stewards

The world has found a name for this servant leader … The Bible calls it; “father”.

THE COVENANT

Before we start with the study of father-servant leaders we need to establish the foundation on which that concept is built - the principle of Covenant.

God approaches humans with the concept of a Covenant. Whether it is Adam / Eve or Noah, or Abraham—the concept remains the same—God will make Covenant with us, however, we need to observe His governance structure.

The picture created with Abraham leaves a vivid image of the intent, magnitude and value of that Covenant.

Every time that the prophets speak about God’s attributes or about the release that will come at the end of the judgment (Assyria / Babylon) or about the Messianic Age, you will find the reference to, and the use of, the Covenant Rights of the Covenant, being claimed.
Ezekiel 20:35-37 “... and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you and contend with you face to face. 36 As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment and contend with you,” says the Lord God. 37 “I will make you pass under the rod [as the shepherd does with his sheep when he counts them, and I will count you as Mine and constrain you] and bring you into the bond of the covenant [to which you are permanently bound].”

Background to the Covenant

The Israelites took the idea from their Mesopotamian / West Semite neighbours. These Covenants were an agreement between the victor / stronger party and the loser / weaker party, which resulted in that party becoming vassels / “slaves” by forcing them to accept the victor’s ideas / values / paying tax. At the same time this covenant allows the individuals to continue with their personal traditions / religions. (Under Roman rulership, the Jews could continue to worship in their temple until they tried to overthrow them.) The Israelites take this idea BUT reverse the principle.

God, the “Greater Power”, agrees to:

- Connect / Covenant with man
- Limit His own powers to allow man to be free to make his own choices
- Provide protection / provision for man

Provided that:

Mankind accepts the mutual obligation to live according to God’s standard of righteousness

The Hebrew word for Covenant is “brit”

The origins of the word as vague - the two Akkadian words that are related to it are:

- “britum—space between” and
- “bereiti—fetter / binding agreement”

Brit forms the Covenant.

“hesed” (often translated as “grace”) is the action that God takes to help us meet the Covenantal terms. (After all, how many times have we failed and yet He still cares for us).

Our response is: The actions of loving obedience to His Commandments. Another description could be:

The obligations of the Covenant are the extent that you and I need to go (above and beyond) to ensure that our Covenantal Partner is satisfied with our commitment.

**NUGGET** It almost seems AS IF the Covenant = fettered freedom (what about servant-leader??)
How is the Covenant operationalized in the Bible?

As soon as we understand the role / purpose of the Fathers of our faith, and move into the next phase of our spiritual journey to learn about how we must live in our “nation-status”, we find a change in the form / model used in practical day-to-day life to reflect the Covenant.

For example: In the beginning of your journey with God, you interpret the Covenant in a one-on-one basis – just like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did.

It is critical to move on to the stage where you are part of the Body of Messiah in which case the Covenant becomes God relating to many – and therefore the effectiveness of the Body of Messiah in reflecting God’s attributes becomes critical.

The Covenant is the basis for the following themes in the Bible

(a) Man’s role as steward on earth - and it is this particular aspect which requires the father figure to become prominent

(b) The role that the Body of Messiah is to play among the nations in releasing God’s redemption plan - and it is this particular aspect which requires the Body of Messiah to produce servant leaders

(c) God’s preferred form of governance – namely, that every individual should be accountable for his own choice to serve God and has the right to give his consent to every single decision that could impact the nation (not democracy)

The structure of governance set out by Jethro ensures that work gets done but does not reserve positional power to anyone person or family.

**NUGGET** Covenants create relationships not structure.

(d) The concept of the Messianic Age and determining exactly how we should be preparing to meet this requirement.

Note: Here we take note that two matters are important:

(i) Fulfilling the Covenant, and
(ii) Restoring the federation of tribes as a governmental structure

For more reading on this point see Ezekiel 16,17,20, 34, 37, 44

As we continue on with this discussion, keep in the back of your mind that much of what we talk to will be the positive outpouring of the Covenant in deeds, which make the world sit up and take notice
The Characteristics of a GODLY Father-leader

The seminal verses that describe a father’s role, speak to the fact that it is at 24 hour / 365 day job, there is no “off” time, there is no holiday from the commitment.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our GOD, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your GOD with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

This fact therefore implies that fathers will ROLE MODEL the various behaviour’s / attitudes / values that are acceptable over an extended period.

When the child is very small, these examples must be presented as simply as possible. Over time, the same lesson will take on far more complicated scenarios and interplay with others.

Taking this forward in Biblical time, means that the basic lessons must be in place for all possible events by the age of 13, when other peer groups will begin to impart their views of life. When this happens, we need to have the Biblical BENCHMARK set firmly into our character.

(c) Fathers role model through justice / healing

One of the fundamental building blocks of any human being’s value system is a sound understanding of the concept of justice.

Justice is not only the action to be fair in a time of dispute, but rather the principle never to do anything that would give you an unfair advantage over others i.e. business / sport / politics.

This includes concepts such as:

- Paying a fair wage
- Opposing slavery
- Opposing abuse

Since many people have suffered abuse at the hands of others and now carry wounds and hurts that preclude them from a normal healthy life, one of the leadership roles is to identify those hurt and to facilitate a process of healing.

Once people have been made whole, the servant leader should go about the process of identifying their GOD–given gifts / talents. He should take steps to train people in their specific gifts, empower them to cover the weaknesses of those gifts and then … release them into the appropriate position within the Body of Messiah where they can grow / flourish and make a difference in other people’s lives.
We will know that we cannot do things on our own. Even more surely, we are made for a very specific part of the Body of Messiah. This implies that we can only function in that place that we were made for.

Healing / satisfaction comes when I take responsibility for that work / action that is required of that part of the Body of Messiah.

(b) Fathers role model through compassion / empathy

In a world where the best receives the glory and those last in line are all but forgotten, Biblical leaders should have the wherewithal to see the individual value and special abilities in a person.

Not only should he see these, but he should be focused on further development and training in these areas, and then he should be concerned with finding the right position for that individual to thrive.

Such a leader will value diverse opinion…he will seek to hear alternative views and he will not be putting people into stereotype boxes based on the fact that these people come from a different culture.

Not only will he be able to understand diverse views, but also, he will be able to work in a community made up of strangers and still be able to reveal how GOD expects us to love our neighbour.
(c) Fathers role model by humility / trust / listening

1. The first thing that you will realise of a leader, who is humble, is that books, articles and electronic media surround them. They are always searching for the truth and openly express the opinion that they welcome investigation into their thinking in order to test its credibility.

This principle of continuous learning is not only a wonderful means to remain humble; it's a prerequisite from GOD.

**Deuteronomy 17:19** “And it shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear [and worship] the Lord his God [with awe-filled reverence and profound respect], by carefully obeying (keeping foremost in his thoughts and actively doing) all the words of this law and these statutes. It is to remain with him and he is to read in it every day, as long as he lives, so that he will learn to fear ADONAI his GOD and keep all the words of this Torah and these Laws and obey them”

**Joshua 1:8** “Yes, keep this Book of the Torah on your lips, and meditate on it day and night, so that you will take care to act according to everything written in it. Then your undertakings will prosper, and you will succeed.”

2. The second attribute of a servant leader who is humble, is the ability to create a culture of TRUST.

The modern world, with its performance-orientated goals, creates a web of deceit and mistrust. Simply said … how can I trust you with a secret or a better plan when both of us want to be recognised as the best in the team?

Servant leaders reject all forms of gossip, create opportunities for people with opposing views to face one another and debate the matter, and actively work to ensure transparency and sharing of all information.

3. A third attribute of servant leaders is that they are good listeners. They will seek clarity on what is said and felt.

They will be able to understand the fears / hopes and dreams of all concerned so that not one of the family / tribe is left behind (this does not mean that we agree with everything being said).

(d) Fathers role model of emotional connectedness

One of the realities of this fast-paced world is that we have all become so very busy. Not only do we have the opportunity to do many and diverse things / activities, we are also faced with the communication era of computers / smart phones and software that connects people such as Facebook
In this fast-paced world, it’s very easy not to be aware of the emotional status of some of your family and friends.

In one sense, it’s wonderful not to see / be aware of any problems, simply because you don’t have to worry about it. But if you are a parent who is determined to follow your calling, then you will want to be very tuned in to their fears / concerns / expectations, and so forth, so that you can react timeously and can offer the support needed.

Once you are aware that a problem exists, then you can set in motion the action, which can work towards a healing.

Importantly, these problems will manifest on many different levels. Take note: it is not only spiritual, but can, for example, be a perceived weight problem for girls, or it can be a poor muscle structure for a boy; it can be a lack of ball sense … in other words, it’s anything that the world will use to judge and benchmark someone, as unacceptable.

One of the features of a great parent is the ability to encourage despite the circumstances … and note the words are “… let us, (not you on your own), go and try.”

Fathers who are emotionally connected will strive to delegate responsibility to others in order to challenge them to grow. Such Fathers will never be afraid to give up power, because they know that seeing others take up the challenge and succeed is far more significant that being successful at something yourself … simply because you know that the feat can be multiplied dozens of times even when you are absent.

A Biblical example is Jethro ➔ telling Moses what he are doing by trying to keep the entire leadership role for himself, was NOT GOOD.
Exodus 18.14-17 “When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?” 15 And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of GOD; 16 when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of GOD and his laws.” 17 Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good.

(e) Fathers role model by revealing GODLY influence

The world system speaks of a system of “command” and obey … these days the world system tries to modify this by implying that consultation before decision-making is an inclusive system.

In fact, this façade creates more unhappiness as people soon realize that there is a hidden agenda at play, and then become a group that is either happy disengaged, or actively seeking to move on.

Influence is the ability to convince others of a need to change; either a burning platform where you make people aware of the issues and therefore the imperative to change, or you create a vision of a better new world. David and Joshua best display this ability by getting 12 tribes of different thinking people to work together.

An influencer thinks of “you", not “me”.

And this can only be true if you truly believe in the people whom you lead … they may make mistakes that you must correct; they may disappoint you sometimes, but in the main you know that they are giving of their best.

(f) Fathers role model by releasing creativity

Innovation has become the name of the game.

- People have dreams that are based on the exploits of others that have gone before them.
- There was a time when, to run the mile in under 4 minutes, was a huge feat.
- Today new records get set at regular intervals.
- Fathers are empowered to discern exactly what talents and gifts have been imparted to each child.
- To develop those talents requires a concerted effort to plan, not only in the timing; how do we expose people to challenges, but also the pace at which we do so. In this case, it’s important to set tough enough goals without discouraging the individual. And GOD knows what the best time is … listen carefully to the Holy Spirit.

Numbers 27:16-17 “Let the LORD, the GOD of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation 17 who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.”
**Fathers role model the art of Strategic planning**

We live in a world that is constantly changing. Consider the fact that 100 years ago most people still used the horse or the donkey / camel, while today any trip of some distance can only be done in an airplane. Think about the concept of the old landline telephone and the new portable cell phone. But more critically is the change in the distribution and control of information. Shops that sold books are now obsolete as people purchase these over the Internet.

You must be prepared to investigate strange things!!!

**Exodus 3:2-3** “And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.”

It’s this type of change that can radically make or break a remarkable plan.

For this reason, fathers must teach children the art of scenario planning.

The ability to take note of changes in the environment, of new developments, of new evolving trends, and then commit this to a scenario plan to identify possible alternatives to be investigated.

A father who puts his child on a single track destination without this kind of training, is failing dismally in his leadership role. The likelihood exists that this lack of creativity and ability to adjust will cause catastrophe when you reach a dead-end or a cliff without a bridge.

What do we want to do? We need to empower the next generation to have the foresight to see various outcomes from a difficult situation and to be able to plan various alternative solutions so that they are not stuck.
What we need is to repeat the lessons of old … every single mistake our Biblical forefathers made, we need to help them identify the current realities for what they are … we need to take the Land (and not what we would want them to be), and we need to build an appreciation for estimating the cost / consequence of any action taken (me and my house we will serve the Lord).

We need to teach others to look up and around, while at the same time looking down at the job at hand.

Joshua 2:1  “And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.”

(h) Fathers role model the function of Stewardship

The Book of Genesis describes clearly … we have been given a mandate; to keep and guard the Garden, to have dominion over the earth and all that’s in it (but not on fellow humans), and we have to be accountable to GOD for what we accomplish with this calling.  

(Genesis 1:28)

Genesis 1:28  “And GOD blessed them. And GOD said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Stewardship speaks to an understanding that we have a responsibility to leave the Garden in a better state than how we found it, that we must build more than what we utilise.

To this end, the perpetual use of farm land without rest is contrary to GOD’s Principles, and the use of water without a care in the world, reflects a belief that we can call on GOD anytime that we like to bring more rain … that is an undesirable level of arrogance and shows that we do not value the gift of the Garden nor the Giver of the gift!!!

It’s within this domain that many of our most precious values are to be discovered.
Integrity

How many of us remember the day when, if two people shook hands on a deal, then it was irrevocable and everybody understood that.

- This concept is a fundamental building block of the principle of Covenant.
- The bond of my word was enough to live or die by.
- A similar thought is contained in the salt Covenant idea. Once we had broken bread, together with salt, you as my guest are completely safe from all harm. You simply cannot be a good steward if you do not have integrity.

Honesty

- Honesty, as a value, follows closely on that of integrity.
- However, honesty includes the understanding that you will make right all damage / harm even if no claim is laid.
- Honesty includes the application of fairness, diligence and justice

Don’t judge each day by the harvest that you reap, but by the seeds that you plant.

A wonderful quote ~ RL Stevenson ~

(i) Fathers role model by Community building → citizenship

- The world has created large corporations / huge companies that own a great deal of resource, or governmental organizations that attempt to control mankind via their influence in the media and the minds of the masses.
- The best structure from the Bible, is the family in a clan, in a tribe, in a community.
- Community come together for common purpose; religion / welfare /celebrations and sometimes to go to war when the group is under attack.
- Within this context, the community either grows together or suffers together and we do not get the huge differentials of wealth, health, and so forth, that we do today.
- While leadership can be stressful and demanding, the rewards are great when you see a community respond and start to function for themselves!

Numbers 11:11-15 “Moses said to the LORD, “Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favour in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? 12 Did I conceive all his people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,’ to the land that you swore to give their fathers? 13 Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ 14 I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. 15 If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favour in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.”
(j) Fathers role model how to leave a legacy

When you reach that point in life when you accept that every individual is “equal, but unique”, you will fight to ensure that no one will ever be oppressed by others again. You will also realize that you are called to be accountable as stewards of the “Garden”— that place where you have been placed by God to impact the world, which will then mean that you will believe in and work towards leaving a legacy.

Legacy empowers OTHERS in your lifetime … legacy does not equal inheritance.

Legacy is described in these strange words:

❖ It’s better to teach a man to fish than to feed him every day.

But legacy equals hard work. Sometimes we have neighbours who do not think or believe as we do…When we walk in obedience to God’s Commandments by living out a lifestyle of long-term legacy – in other words – considering others and not only living for yourself – you will be revealing acts of loving kindness and “loving your neighbour” towards others who do not think like you do.

A FINAL THOUGHT

❖ We can KNOW the WORD
❖ We can be gifted charismatic teachers / speakers … BUT
❖ The world will be changed / impacted when we become SERVANT-LEADERS

PETITION

Father, Your original mandate stills stands. We are to take dominion. We are to keep and guard this Garden that You placed us in. I understand that You have placed me in a specific place here on earth, amongst a specific culture with a purpose … in a spiritual sense we are all tribes that are connected to You with a calling to “change the domain” that we live in, so that it reflects Your Glory.

We accept Your calling to SERVE Your people, as well as those in our community that do not know You, by acts of loving our neighbour.

Amen