



## Ministry Sphere 2 | Training Leadership

Leadership is important. Jesus trained disciples, who in turn led the early church into great triumphs for God's kingdom. Leadership was critical to God's kingdom in Christ's day, and the Lord seeks to guide churches through their leaders today.

A good leader is above all a good learner. The challenges leaders face are ongoing; so must be their training. A leader cannot teach or challenge others to grow if that leader is not experiencing spiritual growth him or herself. The materials on this webpage are designed to help leaders guide their churches to grow ministry for people experiencing sexual and relational brokenness.

### **Overcoming Leadership Hang-ups | by W.P. Campbell**

When the topic of sexual brokenness or homosexuality is brought to leaders for study, you may find some resistance. Don't be surprised if some of your leaders "react" rather than "respond" thoughtfully to the issue of homosexuality.

- Some may have deep emotional concerns because of a difficult experience with a family member or perhaps an activist for the cause of gay rights.
- Others may have become so weary of the arguments and differing perspectives on the topic that they don't believe there are any real answers.
- Some may know a family member or childhood friend who struggles with homosexuality, and based on their experience, may feel they are already deeply knowledgeable on the subject. Remind your leaders that every person's experience is different and that our goal is to learn a holistic and Christ-like response to this topic.
- Some may have already read a book, watched a seminar, or through other sources have become convinced that this subject is really simple and that there is nothing more to learn.

### **Help your leaders get beyond their hang-ups.**

- Emphasize that homosexuality is a complex subject. To simply know that homosexual practice is sinful is not the end of the story. We are called by Scripture to help those who struggle with sin to find salvation and to live in holiness. Our leaders must become learners.
- Show your leadership team the video clip, "Six Surprises: Lessons from the Journey," which is on the free promotional trailer DVD. Remind your leaders that there is no part of life

that the gospel doesn't touch, and that we need to bring grace and truth to the fore even around this difficult issue.

- If you still find resistance, ask all of your leaders to read, *Turning Controversy into Church Ministry: A Christ-like Response to Homosexuality* before moving forward. If, however, they are not resistant to further study, they can read the book as you journey together through the Cutting-edge Ministry DVD series. It is usually best for a leadership team to experience the small group series before they launch into the leadership training series.

### **Insights for Leaders | by W.P. Campbell**

In the process of writing the book, *Turning Controversy into Church Ministry: A Christ-like Response to Homosexuality*, I interviewed dozens of Christian leaders whose life calling is to help Christians and the church offer ministries of healing to people with unwanted same-sex attractions. I have combined some of their insights with my own to offer the following suggestions for developing this ministry:

#### **Take a Christ-like Stance**

- If you take a public stand around the topic of homosexuality, you can expect an emotional response from at least some people. It is important to listen and not react to people's reactions. It is in listening that we begin to lay the foundations for ministry.
- If you adopt a balanced and biblical stance on this issue, people on both extremes of the spectrum will likely resist you. The legalist will call you a compromiser and the liberal will call you a legalist. Don't react to the extremes. Rather, stand for grace and truth without compromise.
- There are so few pastors and Christian leaders who embrace a Christ-like stance on this topic that when you do so, a great majority of those who love the Lord will thank you. Far too many Christian leaders avoid difficult subjects rather than address them in a Christ-like manner. You will be deeply respected by many, even if few say so publicly.

#### **Focus on Ministry**

- Because homosexuality is such a politicized topic, don't rush to tell the world out there that you are developing ministry in this area. First educate your church, and allow ministry to unfold organically and naturally. Begin by teaching your people about the biblical values that call us to show grace to everyone while not compromising truth. Teach them about Christ's call to be humble and transparent with others. Remind them that we all have areas in which we struggle.
- When you talk about this topic, don't waste your time engaging in arguments about gay rights and all of the hot button political issues. These topics generate controversy, and squelch ministry. (There is a place for public debate, but the focus of this website is on developing ministry.) In fact, if you set yourself up to be a magnet for controversy, even an

attempt to do ministry may work against your church. It is important that in being bold for Jesus we are also wise (Matthew 10:16).

- If for some reason a sermon you preach or event you host related to homosexuality actually draws picketers (which is not likely if your focus is on ministry rather than controversy), recognize even the picketers as part of your ministry opportunity. Arrange for several mature Christians to go out to mix with the picketers to listen to them and love them. If it's a hot day, those who greet them can bring out cooled bottled water. Aim not to confront the picketers but to show kindness toward them. Look for opportunity to be a witness for Christ in every situation.

### **Be Wise and Truthful in Your Reactions and Descriptions**

- Gay rights activists sometimes feature “ex-gays” who have gone back to their old homosexual lifestyle. (They do so to support the notion that gays and lesbians actually cannot change.) But does this really prove anything? Think about alcoholism, for example. While homosexuality is not an issue of addiction (but people who are gay may be sexually addicted), a parallel with alcoholism may apply. Ministries like Alcoholics Anonymous are making a great impact, and even if some members of AA “fall off the wagon,” we are not greatly surprised and we don’t therefore reject the whole movement.
- Explain to your church members and to others who question your ministry or your motives, that your focus is toward those who struggle with unwanted same-sex attractions. To ignore them or anyone who comes to you for support would be unloving. The goal is not to make homosexuals become heterosexual. Our calling is to preach the gospel and to support homosexuals who want to honor God by living lives of holiness.
- Recognize that the struggle people with unwanted same-sex attractions experience is not much different on a deeper level than are struggles with issues of sexuality that heterosexuals face. When any of us surrenders our lives to Jesus and chooses to live in holiness and to abstain from activities God calls sin, God gives us grace. And overtime, he can change us. But the challenges can be great and we need the support of Christian community.
- Leaders of the “post-gay” movement (the current trend by some Christians is to avoid the terms “ex-gay,” or “ex-homosexual” because they have become so politically loaded) will tell you that many who have come out of homosexuality still experience same-sex attractions on some level. This should not be a surprise to us. We are all in the process of being sanctified, of being changed over a lifetime. While God is in the business of doing miracles, he normally molds our characters and shapes our lives over the years.
- We must not oversimplify the causes of same-sex attractions and we must be careful always to distinguish between the sin of homosexual practice and the struggle many Christians face who experience unwanted same-sex attractions. We must also be careful not to lift up one sin above others, and we should continually emphasize the grace and power of God to help each of us to grow and change.

## **Further Training for Leaders**

We strongly recommend that each church leadership team engage in study beyond the DVD series offered in this Cutting-edge Ministry program. Explore the insights from other churches and the resources mentioned below. To continually deepen understanding about homosexuality is to better understand heterosexuality, and humanity. To strengthen ministry around sexual brokenness is to touch the deepest levels of need in your church members and in your community.

Ongoing leadership training around other topics is also important. Some leadership teams have benefited from Willow Creek's Leadership Summits (<http://willowcreek.com/events/leadership/>), for example. Explore the leadership training materials offered by your own denomination. Consider each of the ministry spheres described on this website and keep your study balanced by rotating training topics between the spheres over time.

## **Insights from Other Churches**

This website is where you come in! Send us stories and suggestions related to leadership and we'll review them for publication on this site. We are especially interested in insights and experiences about leadership of ministry for sexual brokenness and the like, but this site is not limited to such topics. Information will remain anonymous if you present it as such or state that as your preference. Come back to this site soon to learn new ideas from other congregations!

One church has found resources by Freedom in Christ Ministries ([www.freedominchrist.com](http://www.freedominchrist.com)) (featuring books and study guides by Neil Anderson) to be helpful for leadership training as well as for mentoring and small group study.

## **Resources on Leadership**

Anderson, Leith. *Leadership That Works: Hope and Direction for Church and Parachurch Leaders in Today's Complex World*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1999.

Barna, George and Dallas, Bill. *Master Leaders: Revealing Conversations with 30 Leadership Greats*. Carol Stream, Ill Tyndale House, 2009.

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Maxwell, John C. The 21 Irrefutable Laws Of Leadership. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998.

Maxwell, John C. The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork: Embrace Them and Empower Your Team. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001.

Nouwen, Henri J.M. In The Name Of Jesus: Reflections On Christian Leadership. New York: Crossroads, 1989.

Sanders, J. Oswald. Spiritual Leadership. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.

Swindoll, Charles R. Hand Me Another Brick: How Effective Leaders Motivate Themselves and Others. Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998.

Stott, John R. W. Basic Christian Leadership: Biblical Models of Church, Gospel And Ministry. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006.

Stott, John R. W., and Nystrom, Carolyn. Christian Leadership: 9 Studies for Individuals or Groups - Lifeguide Bible Studies. Downers Grove: IVP, 2006.

White, John. Excellence In Leadership: The Pattern of Nehemiah. Downers Grove: IVP, 1986.

Woods, C. Jeff. Better Than Success: 8 Principles of Faithful Leadership. Valley Forge, PA, Judson Press, 2001.