



Grace for Everyone

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Definitions for leadership have evolved over the past century. While scholars still do not agree on a succinct definition of leadership, they do agree that defining leadership is as complex as the process itself. Dynamic and effective leadership is a major attribute that sets successful organizations apart from those that are unsuccessful. If there has ever been a time that the world has needed the grace of God in leadership development, that time is now. The Bible reveals that the concepts of leadership and grace originated with God. Sadly, when humankind disobeyed God, the model for humans ruling over humans was established, and the Kingdom principle of leadership perfected by grace was perverted and abandoned. The question is not whether God is pouring out grace to meet the needs of today, the question is whether leaders will allow God's manifold grace to have the unrestricted flow required to advance leadership development through grace to make the world a better place for all

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to live. Therefore, this chapter will unpack the discipline of leadership development through the lens of grace to explore the potential value of applying common grace in leadership development to produce greater outcomes in a contemporary postmodern global context.

Developing a succinct definition of leadership has been quite difficult for theologians, scholars, and practitioners. Upon wrestling with the concept of leadership, Engstrom (1976) concluded that leadership is an elusive quality, if it is a quality at all. Traditionally, scholars have viewed leadership as a leader's influence over followers (Van Velsor et al., 2010). However, the Biblical account of creation reveals that the concepts of leadership, followership, and grace originated with God. As the grand orchestrator of creation, God first revealed Himself to be a gracious leader when He mandated order amidst an empty and formless chaos (Gen. 1:2–3). When God created humankind in His image, He ordained humans to follow His paradigm in ruling over the habitat that God had created as the dwelling place for all life (Gen. 1:26).

Genesis 2:15 further discloses that work is a communal grace gift from God. God's intention for work is part of His plan for humanity and becomes a basis for principles of leadership and followership. However, nowhere in God's cultural mandate is the principle of humans ruling over humans found. Rather, a precedent for leadership development driven by grace emerges in that humankind in its entirety is created in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:27). Sadly, when humankind disobeyed God, the model for humans ruling over humans was established (Gen. 3:16), and the Kingdom principle of leadership was perverted and abandoned. Therefore, this chapter will unpack the discipline of leadership development through the lens of grace, to explore the notion of applying a theology of common grace in leadership development to produce greater outcomes in a contemporary postmodern global context.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership and followership are key elements of any organization. The definitions and meanings established for leadership and followership within an organization impacts culture, communication, and collaboration between its leader(s) and follower(s). Scholars and practitioners have attempted to define leadership for many years. According to Northouse (2016), scholars began researching the contemporary phenomenon of

leadership around 1900. Rost (1991) discovered over 200 varied classifications of leadership when examining material printed between 1900 and 1990. Additionally, Winston and Patterson (2006) found 160 articles and books containing a definition, a scale, or a construct for leadership. The prevailing definitions for leadership between 1900 and 1930 emphasized control and centralization of power through domination (Northouse, 2016).

The trait theory, which emphasizes influence and the personality traits of the leader emerged during the 1930s (Northouse, 2016). The group approach, developed beginning in 1940, focuses on the behavior of the leader when directing followers (Hemphill, 1949). During the 1950s, leadership was defined based on three different themes: (1) group theory; (2) the development of group goals; and, (3) a leader's ability to influence overall group effectiveness (Northouse, 2016). Scholars galvanized during the 1960s and leadership was largely defined as a behavior which influences followers toward shared goals (Seeman, 1960). The basis for defining leadership in the early 1970s emphasized the organizational behavior approach, which focused on the accomplishment of organizational and group goals (Rost, 1991). However, the definition with the most impact during the 1970s developed by Burns (1978) asserted the following:

Leadership is a reciprocal process of mobilizing by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers. (p. 425)

During the decade of the 1980s, scholars and practitioners defined leadership in many different ways. Some defined it as a leader getting followers to do what the leader wanted to be done, while others defined it as influence without the use of coercion (Northouse, 2016). Burns (1978) uniquely defined it as a transformational process where a leader or leaders and followers encourage higher levels of motivation and morals in one another. Since the advent of the twenty-first century, leadership has primarily been viewed as a process where one or more people influence a group of people to accomplish a collective objective (Northouse, 2016). According to Yukl (2013), influence is the very essence of leadership. While scholars still do not agree on a succinct definition of leadership, they do, however, agree that defining leadership is as complex as the process itself (Northouse, 2016).

UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Dynamic and effective leadership is a major attribute that sets successful organizations apart from those that are unsuccessful (Engstrom, 1976). Northouse (2016) suggested that leadership is contextual and that many different approaches and theories to the discipline of leadership exist. While the trait approach to leadership advocates leaders are born, scholars and practitioners overwhelmingly agree that leaders emerge within the context of organizational systems of leadership development (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Van Velsor et al. (2010) highlighted the importance of distinguishing between leader development and leadership development. They asserted that leader development expands the aptitude of performance in leadership roles on an individual level, while leadership development involves the collective efforts of an organization to foster direction, alignment, and commitment through leadership programs. Van Velsor et al. made several assumptions in their approach to leader development. The first assumption was that the roles and processes of leadership cover a broad spectrum. The second assumption was that systems are equally effective depending on the desired outcomes. The final assumption was that people can increase their capacity to lead outside of a company's internal development processes (Van Velsor et al., 2010).

Avolio and Hannah (2008) clarified that while the development of leaders is a stated goal of most organizations, no valid organizational framework, theory, methodology, or system exists for producing leaders. Van Velsor et al. (2010) added that a system is much broader than a program and encompasses all aspects of the organization that contributes to producing effective leaders. Many organizations believe they can experience the full benefit of leadership development based on biblical constructs. For instance, Bekker (2009) pointed out that true conversion to humility in the context of leadership development starts and ends with God. Similarly, Engstrom (1976) asserted that all truth, including the truth about developing leaders, originates with God. The Bible also conclusively teaches that leadership development begins at the point of a relationship with God (Gen. 1:26; Wanner & Huizing, 2017).

Transformational, authentic, and servant leadership are three approaches founded on the principle of relationship at their core (Northouse, 2016). Performance improvement, succession management, and

organizational change each stand a better chance of being transformational when rooted and grounded in authentic servant relationships (Geiger & Peck, 2016). According to McCauley and Douglas (2004), relationships are a rich source of assessment, challenge, and support, and therefore, serve as a powerful driver of learning and development. For instance, Paul was empowered to contribute to Timothy's development as a leader by leveraging their relationship to teach, coach, mentor, provide ongoing feedback, and facilitate the design, development, and implementation of the vision for the future of the Church (Engstrom, 1976).

A BIBLICAL CONSTRUCT FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Engstrom (1976) asserted that good leadership evolves from rightly synthesizing and applying valid management principles and human relations. Geiger and Peck (2016) suggested that conviction, culture, and constructs are required to develop leaders consistently and intentionally within organizations. According to Geiger and Peck, conviction is a God-initiated passion that fuels a leader and organization; culture is the shared beliefs and values that drive the behavior of a group of people; and constructs are systems, processes, and programs which contribute to developing leaders. They further asserted that conviction without constructs result in frustration, constructs without culture result in exhaustion, and constructs without conviction results in apathy (Geiger & Peck, 2016).

According to Geiger and Peck (2016), Moses and Joshua, his successor, serve as an example of conviction for developing leaders in one instance and a lack of conviction in the other. They noted that while Moses was gripped with a conviction to develop Joshua as a leader, Joshua failed to identify and develop anyone to lead after his death. Subsequently, after Moses died, God immediately identified Joshua as the new leader and instructed him on how to lead the people effectively (Jsh. 1:1–9). However, because Joshua was not passionate about developing leaders to succeed him, a divisive attitude led to everyone doing what they believed to be right (Jdg. 2:6–15), the people transitioning into the period of the Judges, another generation rising up who did not know the Lord, and God's chosen people eventually desiring a king like all the other nations (1 Sam. 8:1–9).

According to Blanchard and Hodges (2005), Jesus stands as the greatest example of a leader who possessed a conviction to develop leaders who impacted culture through effective constructs. They also noted that the characteristics of all successful leadership development attempts to model the leadership style of Jesus either knowingly or unknowingly (Blanchard & Hodges, 2005). They further noted that Christians have more in Jesus than just a spiritual leader but also a practical and effective leadership model for all organizations. They focused on the four components of the heart, head, hands, and habits of leaders to highlight the transformational appeal of developing leaders within any organization (Blanchard & Hodges, 2005). Kouzes and Posner (2012) argued that the characteristics and qualities of great leadership are consistent across different types of organizations. They further posited that all extraordinary leaders who spawn other leaders model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the hearts of the leaders they develop (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

APPREHENDING GOD'S AMAZING GRACE

Grace is an abstract term that the Christian Bible defines in many different ways. In Ephesians 3:8, grace is described as the favor and privilege entrusted for proclaiming the unending, boundless, fathomless, incalculable, and exhaustless riches of Christ which no human being could otherwise discover. First Peter 4:10 describes manifold grace as many-sided with extremely diverse powers and gifts.

From a Biblical viewpoint, the Church should be an incubator for producing and releasing leaders into the world gifted with the grace of God to lead in a manner that makes the world a wealthier place to live. Wealth in this context does not pertain to money or worldly possessions, but courtesy, politeness, goodness, decency, respect, and quality of life. Geiger and Peck (2016) explained that as the locus for leadership development, the church is responsible for the formation, development, and launching of leaders into the world infused with the grace of God to impact positive change. Within a contemporary context, there are several different common uses of the word grace including beauty, elegance, charm or good manners, honorable titles, or, more commonly in religious circles, a gift bestowed by God to save humanity from sin and judgment. However, according to Thomas and Rowland (2014), the target of grace, as applied in leadership development through doing good to

others and demonstrating empathy and sympathy in a pragmatic environment requiring decision-making and judgment, is the objective of the Christian leader with a trained eye. In this context, grace involves showing compassion, kindness, goodwill, generosity, and benevolence towards stakeholders within an organization and society as a whole (Thomas & Rowland, 2014). In other words, in everything, a Christian leader must do to others what they would have others do to them (Mt. 7:12).

AN ARGUMENT FOR COMMON GRACE

Some theologians have taken it a step further and suggested that a doctrine of common or universal grace makes a strong biblical case for engaging the culture while embracing the gospel (Welchel, 2017). According to Welchel (2017), there is a biblical precedent for believers cooperating with those of other beliefs. This view is consistent with the teaching of Luke 6:31 to treat people the way one would want to be treated. Welchel argued that common grace serves God's greater purpose of saving grace and demonstrates God's goodness, mercy, justice, and glory. Welchel further suggested that common grace is common because it is universal, and it is grace because it is undeserved and given by a benevolent God. Grasping the concept of common grace is imperative for Christian leaders if they are to understand how God wants to use them more fully and effectively in the area of leadership development.

Grace, according to Baldoni (2019), on a human level, is about perspective. Baldoni viewed grace as a fundamental component of service that all great leaders must model for the benefit of those around them and spread to society. According to Baldoni, grace is made actionable through the virtues of love, sacrifice, truth, and courage. Grace is the motivation that drives a leader to act upon what they know is right to do, and it becomes the inspiration for treating individuals with generosity, respect, and compassion (Baldoni, 2019). Grace further manifests as action in the name of others and energizes a leader to act in a manner that serves the greater good of others. To help understand grace better and encourage Christian leaders to apply it intentionally in leadership development, Baldoni used the five components of generosity, respect, action, compassion, and energy as an acrostic to explore grace more fully.

Generosity

This component seeks to consider how to make the world better while seeking openings to invest in others. It interprets challenges as instructional experiences, and it bases decisions on what is in the best interest of the organization and its stakeholders (Baldoni, 2019). Generous leaders give of themselves unconditionally and leverage who they are and what they can do to benefit others. Gracious Leaders employ a selfless approach to life; they share their time, talent, knowledge, and power (Baldoni, 2019). However, this goes beyond just an introspective response. Rather, generosity requires understanding and empathizing with others (Benham & Murakami-Ramlho, 2010). As one understands the roles and relationships that are expected in a particular context, one can build a respectfulness where generosity becomes a communal act (Benham & Murakami-Ramalho, 2010). Generosity is contagious because it emanates from an abundant heart (Baldoni, 2019). A selfless leader can find something of value to share with others, even amid personal adversity. A generous leader looks for ways to turn a no into a yes, a negative into a positive, and a loss into a win. This is why generosity is at the heart of social action that focuses on the least and disenfranchised rather than what is best for everyone (Benham & Murakami-Ramalho, 2010).

Respect

In leadership development, respect places everyone on a level playing field because its focus shifts on what separates and instead focuses on the best in and for others (Baldoni, 2019). Basic humanity is recognized at both the individual, communal, and humanity levels that develops a natural humility in the leader (Baldoni, 2019). According to Baldoni (2019), respect is fundamental to human dignity, and how it plays out in a leader's life is a reflection of God's grace at work. While misuse of respect can lead to paternalism (Bedi, 2020) or gender inequality (Fung, 2015), at its best, respect leads to organizational strengths. Respect can lead to greater collaboration in the midst of diversity and even conflicting perspectives (Ferguson, 2011). Respect honors others, as well as oneself, in a spirit of honesty, integrity, and dignity. Self-awareness opens the door to respect for others. In the context of leadership development,

self-awareness grounds a leader in awareness of personal limitations due to culpabilities, habits, and blind spots, as well as the ability to leverage strengths and opportunities to contribute to the growth and maturation of other leaders (Baldoni, 2019).

Action

While grace in action is spiritual at its core, it cannot remain theoretical or ethereal; it only works when activated. However, this intentionality of action requires one to be committed to learning, patience over time, and the effort required (Ly, 2015). Baldoni (2019) reasoned that love, sacrifice, truth, and courage are virtues made actionable by grace, in addition to being essential in leadership and its development. Truth is fundamental to human survival (Baldoni, 2019). Absent the ability to discern real from unreal and truth from untruth, leaders run adrift (Baldoni, 2019). To identify reality in concert with truth empowers a leader to humanize grace in the development of others as leaders. To this end, action practices ways to incorporate grace in serving others as a leader (Baldoni, 2019). As leaders intentionally teach and influence followers by focusing on the follower's unique personality and characteristics, leaders can develop activities that synthesize theory and practice for the follower's benefit (Gregorutti et al., 2017).

Compassion

This component is a “sympathetic consciousness with a desire to alleviate the distress of another” (Merriam-Webster, 2001). Baldoni (2019) asserted that compassion essentially means a passionate concern for others. However, according to Baldoni (2019), passion must be conjoined with a sense of others from a communal perspective. Such a connection comes from an understanding that everyone is flawed and vulnerable, but, from a biblical perspective, people are wondrously and fearfully made by God (Ps. 139:14; Baldoni, 2019). This necessarily requires not just an increase in intellectual understanding of compassion but a deepening of emotional intelligence (Paakkanen et al., 2021). In the context of leadership development, compassion focuses on commonality as human beings and seeks to meet the need of others above and beyond the needs of the leader.

According to Baldoni (2019), compassion bridges the gap between differences, is collaborative, and sees challenges in the workplace as moments for learning as opposed to blaming. However, this is not focused on others like the leader but rather the leader focusing on those suffering, in trouble, or unlike the leader (LaMothe, 2012; Wollenburg, 2004). Forgiveness and mercy are components of compassion. Compassionate leaders make a conscious effort to go high when others choose to go low. True compassion entails genuine and authentic concern for the wellbeing of others regardless of the situation or circumstance, and it forms the life of a leader with a constant awareness of the importance of extending grace to others (Baldoni, 2019). This compassion then is anchored in a radical hopefulness that, not only situations but, people can change for the better given proper opportunity (LaMothe, 2012).

Energy

This final component relates to the strength and vitality that animates purpose and translates what leaders want to do into what they end up doing (Baldoni, 2019). Both psychological and physiological variables are at work in creating this liveliness and dynamism in an individual (Rodríguez-Carvajal et al., 2019). According to Baldoni (2019), energy is like caffeine in that it revs one's internal engine so that they can stay the course when times get tough while continuing to embrace and enjoy the course when things are going well. This can be identified even at the daily level as self-regulated behaviors throughout the day can lead to higher levels of energy the following day (Rodríguez-Carvajal et al., 2019). As a leader, finding sources of energy from within is essential to making grace come alive experientially in the life of a leader as well as in the lives of countless others (Baldoni, 2019). However, due to the finiteness of humanity, finding sources of renewal, rest, and other forms of support systems and practices are necessary to restore energy (Chandler, 2009). Energy emerges from inspiration to become inspiring for others. In other words, energy is a form of grace contagious to anyone in the vicinity of a leader with charisma.

Grace renews itself through practice as well as by taking in life, doing one's best, enjoying the highlights, mourning the losses, and doing so in the full spirit of life (Baldoni, 2019). In forgiveness, mercy, joy, and humor, grace draws energy from a positive outlook and an abundant mindset (Baldoni, 2019). A leader's commitment to demonstrate grace

spills over into other areas because it becomes an overall approach to life. Baldoni (2019) proclaimed that grace, in all of its dimensions, is a value that has fallen on hard times. A revival of grace would have significant influence on personal, professional, and public discourse levels.

THE THEOLOGY OF COMMON GRACE

The Bible speaks of God's manifold wisdom in Ephesians 3:10, and His manifold grace in 1 Peter 4:10. According to Haymond (2016), the theory of common grace explains much of the good found in a fallen world, while also explaining why fallen humans do not act worse than they do. While all theologians do not agree on the concept of common grace, Haymond provided valuable information on the history of the doctrine. Haymond explained that while the concept goes as far back as Augustine's identification of a grace that allows humanity to exist, Augustine did not acknowledge it as common grace. While Calvin, according to Haymond, developed the doctrine more fully than Augustine, he is also not credited with coining the term that was later adopted by the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper as common grace. However, by qualifying repetitive blessings in life as part of God's grace, Calvin made a credible argument that God, through His divine will governs life in its entirety (Haymond, 2016).

The concept of common grace, according to Haymond (2016), provided Calvin with a reason for the positive works of totally depraved humans without lessening gifts of God to unbelievers but was not considered the same as God's saving grace. The Reformers did not see the different displays of grace as initiating from two different graces of God; rather, they believed that God revealed grace in diverse ways for different purposes (Haymond, 2016). Haymond explained further that common grace is considered as such because it applies universally to God's people as well as to other peoples. It is noteworthy to clarify that the commonality discussed rests solely upon the human side of the grace equation because no aspect of God's grace can be considered common. Haymond further noted that the blessings that are unmerited and sovereignly bestowed by God are distributed commonly across humanity. According to Haymond, common grace, therefore, is the general favor of God applied to humanity in any manner of unmerited blessings.

Haymond (2016) surmised that the doctrine of common grace explains why rain falls on the just, as well as the unjust (Mt. 5:45), and why

nonbelievers, who are hostile to God and unwilling to obey him (Romans 8:7–8), are nevertheless able to do great things that benefit all mankind. In other words, common grace is behind “every good gift and every perfect gift...from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change (*English Standard Version*, 2016/2001, Jm. 1:17). This obviously includes every good thing that no one deserves. This is what makes the manifold wisdom (Eph. 3:10) and grace (1 Pt. 4:10) of God ultimately inconceivable to mortals, including the redeemed of the Lord.

According to Keller (2011), the doctrine of common grace provides an understanding of God’s goodness in all of creation and empowers Christians to pursue missions with love in a fallen world. Interestingly, grace is a gift that flows out of God’s love for the world in its entirety. Accordingly, Keller noted, common grace is a non-saving grace at work in the broader reaches of human cultural interaction. Keller further proclaimed that due to a void of an understanding of common grace, countless Christians would fall prey to many misconceptions. Keller’s view is consistent with an understanding that God’s manifold wisdom and grace reaches beyond the redeemed of the Lord and extends to the entire human race.

Undoubtedly, preunderstanding and presuppositions have the potential of clouding the view of devout Christians as it relates to any theological topic. Vanhoozer (1998) cautioned that preunderstanding and presuppositions are not always correct. Vanhoozer labeled this attitude as the kind of pride that encourages one to think they have the correct meaning before making the appropriate effort to recover the truth. According to Vanhoozer, pride does not listen, because it already knows.

THE MULTIFACETED NEEDS OF THE WORLD

Since its inception, there has been an expectation for the Church to address social issues in the world. Cole (2010) presented a compelling argument that poverty, economic crises, global inequality, gender identity, same-sex and gender rights, and changes around the traditional views of marriage will influence, shape, and challenge leaders across all spectrums of society. The question is not whether God is pouring out grace to meet the needs of today; it is whether leaders will rightly interpret and allow God’s manifold grace to have unrestricted flow so that leadership can be developed through the lens of grace and the world can experience the manifold wisdom, grace, and power to become a better place for all to live.

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