

LEADERSHIP...

After God's Own Heart

L. Ken Jones, Ph.D.

“...the Lord sought out a man after His own heart and
appointed him leader of His people...”

I Samuel 13:14

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There have been many that have kindly and longingly devoted themselves to making the dream of this book about leadership a reality. They have sacrificed their talents in such a way as to make me look far better than I deserve. To each of them I give my great appreciation.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
SECTION ONE - Process of Leadership.....	7
1. Mission.....	9
2. Values.	13
3. Vision.....	17
4. Leadership Model.	29
5. Passion for the Vision.	32
6. Knowledge and Preparation.	38
SECTION TWO - Principles of Leadership.....	45
7. The Importance of People.....	47
8. Empowering your people.	54
9. Team Spirit.	62
10. Encouragement.....	68
11. Handling Mistakes.	72
12. Perseverance and Problems.....	77
13. Blessings and Gratitude.	85
14. Accountability -.....	90
15. Courage.....	95
16. Credibility.....	103
17. A Leader's Faith.....	109
SECTION THREE - Leadership Awareness.....	117
18. Attitude and Momentum.	119
19. Time for a New Vision.....	124
20. Leadership Renewal.....	128

INTRODUCTION

The future of all people is tied to the leader they follow. Leadership is the driving force behind their pursuit of a better future. Without it, people lack courage, inspiration, and persistence to move forward. Leadership embraces such powerful concepts as credibility, motivation, influence, encouragement, vision, teamwork and empowerment. The importance of leadership cannot be overstated. Families, civic clubs, universities, churches, small businesses, large corporations, athletic teams and even nations are all directly affected by the quality of their leadership. This book is devoted to providing a basic understanding of the dynamics of leadership.

The style of this book may be a bit surprising. In all of my study of leadership, I have not found a better source of material than the Bible. There are many Bible characters that display and teach powerful lessons on leadership. This material is not intended to be a preaching tool. However, Bible stories will be woven through the chapters to teach the basic process and principles of leadership.

The leader who has inspired my interest in leadership more than any other is King David.¹ David is first seen as a shepherd boy tending flocks for his father. One day, he is directed by his father to travel to the place where the army of King Saul is camped. The older brothers of David are a part of the army. Though they are to engage the Philistines in battle, nothing has happened. David's father is concerned and sends his younger son to gather information. When David arrives, he quickly finds the

reason his brothers have been so long at the battle site. The Philistines have a giant champion. Every morning and evening, the giant issues challenges for one Israelite soldier to come and do battle. No Israelite soldier has taken the challenge. David hears the insulting cries of the giant. He is indignant toward the Philistine and volunteers to be the one to fight. Most of you will remember the story of David's victory. The victory propels David to the status of national hero. Everyone soon hears the story of the shepherd boy's defeat of the giant.

King Saul takes David into his palace. He begins to treat David like a son. David grows more and more successful as a military leader. His popularity continues to increase. The problem is, Saul becomes jealous.² His jealousy turns him into a madman. His efforts to kill David are so great that David must run for his life.

In David's escape, he hid in a cave. His family came to help and encourage him. In addition, 400 men came. They were described as men who were discouraged, discontented and in debt. What happened next is a story of outstanding leadership. David molded and developed these men into an army. He turned those discouraged men into a fighting force so great it became known everywhere. His leadership not only moved those men from discouragement to the place of valiant warriors, he also inspired great loyalty among them.

There was also a time when David was discouraged as he was being chased by Saul.³ As with most of us, his thoughts began to be nostalgic. He began to think of life as it used to be. In his moment of discouragement, he let his thoughts slip out as words. He said, "O, if I could just have a drink of water that comes from the well near the gate of Bethlehem." Do you see it? Bethlehem was his

home town. In his discouragement, he was thinking back to the time when he was that happy, contented, shepherd boy.

Three of his men heard those idle, discouraged words. They left the camp. At the risk of their lives, they made their way to the well near the gate of Bethlehem. From that well, they drew water and brought it back to David.

From the time I first read the story, I developed a burning desire to understand. What kind of leader can turn 400 discouraged, discontented men into mighty warriors? What kind of leader instills within followers such loyalty and love that they will risk their lives for nothing more than a cup of water? What kind of leader is it that takes a nation and makes it the mightiest on earth? This book is written to help all of us discover the secret of that kind of leadership.

There are four basic objectives of this material. The first is for every reader to understand the importance of leadership. Emerson said, "Nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm." He was right, but it may also be said, "Nothing great was ever accomplished without great leadership." Voices of history bear loud and clear testimony to the fact that leadership is the key to significant accomplishment. Anytime an individual or a group desires improvement, leadership becomes important. Effective leadership provides the path for people to rise to the level of their dreams. Poor leadership mandates frustration and failure.

The second objective is to show that leadership is not an exact science, but a process. It would be easier if it were. No exact equation or set of steps exist that lead to great leadership. The more I study and observe leadership, the more I am convinced it is an understanding of many simple

principles about life. Good leadership starts with clear understanding of the basic purpose for existence. Why does a particular organization exist? Why was it created? Good leadership begins with an understanding of answers to these questions and continues with a deep understanding of people. What motivates people? What do people need and want? Still, there is more to becoming a great leader. Leaders must have an understanding of the future. Vision is an inseparable part of leadership. But all of these cannot be acquired by a straightforward, calculated methodology. Becoming a leader requires a lifetime of study, application and growth in leadership skills. The intent of this book is to give a foundation and guide to this lifetime pursuit of learning leadership.

The third objective is to outline principles for successful leaders. We will examine principles of leadership practiced by some of history's most successful leaders. Each of these will bring us closer to the lifestyle of an effective leader. To acquire these as a part of our everyday lives, we must meditate upon them, put them into practice and nurture them constantly as a part of the natural fabric of our lives. Each principle will be illustrated by examples from the past.

The fourth objective of this material is to cultivate desire for leadership. I am totally convinced that one's quality of life increases as one's leadership skills increase. It is true not only for the leader, but maybe even more, for the followers. There are not many things one can aspire to do of greater value than becoming a better leader.

To aid the accomplishment of these four objectives, the book is divided into two major sections. The first is

devoted to the understanding of the process of leadership, and the second is devoted to leadership principles.

May God bless you as you endeavor to become a better leader.

SECTION ONE

PROCESS OF LEADERSHIP

“Understanding and Utilizing
the Power of Mission,
Values and Vision”

MISSION

Mission statements have been a part of leadership discussions for a long time. A mission statement is a short collection of words used to describe why an organization exists, the philosophy of its existence and its relationship to the customer. Usually the mission statement is no more than two sentences or, at least, is short enough to be located on the back of a business card. Most organizations have printed mission statements. When asked about mission, they know where to locate the statement. When the statement is read, there is usually general understanding by most of the individuals who are part of the organization. But, what is the reason? Why is mission so important to leadership? Why do groups of people spend time, effort and money to develop the mission statement? It might be surprising how many have the statement and do not know its reason. It might even be more surprising how many leaders have helped develop the statement without clear understanding of its reason or benefit.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Mission has to do with the reason for existence. It is the heart of the organization. Mission is usually discussed in broad terms. It is the parent that gives birth to dreams, decisions and actions. Nothing is formed without some kind of reason or purpose. Determining and understanding that purpose is the starting place for leadership. It might be surprising to know how many organizations deviate from their purpose or mission. The

movement is slow and unintentional. As it is happening, most do not recognize it. Finally, a great awakening results, as people see how far away from the original purpose they have drifted. Leaders have to be very careful of the drifting process. They must be careful about making decisions that are not consistent with the mission of the organization. Therefore, for every leader, clear understanding of the mission is an absolute requirement. The first step in leadership is to understand the mission and to make an unwavering commitment to it.

Leadership at its best starts with a personal examination by the leader. The result may even be a personal mission statement. It is not an easy task. It requires much introspection, meditation, and study. The examination requires an analysis of personal desires, strengths, and background. Finally, after considerable effort, the leader emerges with a basic understanding of his or her reason for existence.

Recently, I began looking at a personal mission statement. It took much consideration. I spent time reflecting on my past. I had to examine what I really enjoy. It caused me to look at talents and abilities which seem to be strengths. It stimulated thoughts as to why I was put on this earth. The result is this personal mission statement: *TO BE A TEACHER FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE BY THE DESIGN AND WILL OF GOD*. This is what I choose for my life to be about. I want to teach others as much as I can about improving life. Most of all, I choose to accomplish this by aligning my thinking with the will of God and the design He has for life.

Many will read this material and take lightly or even skip the thoughts just presented. Most of us are interested in hurrying to those things that seem more directly

beneficial to our place of work or our organization. But skipping the process of personal examination as to the reason or purpose for existence may rob the would-be leader of the solid foundation upon which to build. The leader should take time and make a commitment to this step in the process.

Equipped with a personal mission statement, the leader must now begin to ask questions about the mission of the group he or she is leading. No matter what group, there has to be a reason for existence. Yes, there is a possibility that the reason has become obsolete, but even then, the examination will bring it to new light. Recently, I asked a group of people from a Chamber of Commerce of a relatively large city, “Why were you formed?” It prompted much profitable discussion and reflection. They said they were formed to help ensure the future of the city by being a resource to business leaders in the city. Then I asked a group from the United States Forest Service, “Why were you formed?” They said it was to preserve natural resources such as forests, range lands, wetlands and associated wildlife. Frequently, I ask church organizations, “Why were you formed or what is your reason for existence?” I have asked it of colleges and major corporations. Each time, it inspires profitable discussion and insight. Some know clearly why they were formed and why they exist, while others have strayed from that basic understanding.

Knowing the reason or purpose of existence is a critical part of the foundation for building a future. Therefore, it becomes a vital part of leadership. The process is especially true for new leaders. New CEO’s, new presidents, new preachers and others often jump into an organization and begin to plot a course for the future without a proper examination of the mission. This

usually results in many mistakes and failure. Not only will people not follow, they may even rebel. It would be much better for these new leaders to spend considerable time examining the historical reason for existence. The future is better seen and attained when the past is understood and appreciated. Do not misunderstand. Examination of mission is not just for new leaders. It can revitalize veteran leaders as well. Leaders, like everyone else, fall into ruts. They may become so involved with daily affairs they forget or cannot see the larger picture. In doing so, it is easy to drift off course. Revisiting the mission is a key resource of seasoned leaders to keep their organization on course.

Leadership Lessons

- The mission statement identifies the purpose for existence.
- Great leaders possess the courage and take the time to examine their own personal mission.
- New leaders avoid tragic mistakes by first examining the mission of the group they lead.
- Seasoned leaders find re-acquaintance with the organizational mission a necessity in maintaining vitality and consistent direction.

VALUES

Becoming a leader is not only a process of understanding one's reason for existence, it is also an understanding of the basic values which govern our choices for the present and future. Our chosen values are guideposts through which we travel into the future. They are the stars by which we chart our course. Values may be considered boundaries we refuse to cross. The best leadership is always value-centered leadership.

Our values are so important and precious that, above all else, we refuse to violate them. Of paramount importance, they become tools through which all decisions, choices and actions are filtered. Even more, they become the criteria by which we evaluate every possible dream for the future. If a choice or dream is inconsistent with our stated values, it is not an appropriate choice or dream.

Many individuals and organizations have identified their values. Some commonly stated values are:

Truth	Continuous Improvement
Integrity	Loyalty to Family
Customer Satisfaction	Quality
Importance of People	Safety
Teamwork	Communication

As you read through the list, it may seem that each reflects mere common sense. Or, you may think in your organization all of them are understood and being practiced. The rule of leadership is, unless values are identified, clearly stated and modeled continually, they

are not really an effective part of the organization. Living by the values must be premeditated. It takes time and effort. implementation of the value system must become habitual in the everyday life of the leader.

Violation of values is a serious matter for a leader. It might be interesting to realize how many of our problems or crises that come from within an organization occur because a value has been violated. It is also true personally. Think of the many problems we experience when we act in a manner inconsistent with our own personal value system. Therefore, the leader must be willing to hold himself or herself personally accountable to living by the stated values. The leader must also be willing to hold followers accountable to the organizational values.

Now is a good time to pause in your reading and list your personal values. Next, alongside your personal values, list the values of your organization. Unless you are an exception, the process will be somewhat difficult. We are not usually accustomed to thinking specifically about values. Nor are we accustomed to boldly stating them. Consequently, in our personal and corporate lives, we may not be very consistent at upholding them in daily behavior.

Remember, values must be stated clearly and continually as well as modeled. For example, if “people” are listed as something of great value, then the organization must reflect that in all its decisions. If “people” are said to be valued, yet the organization continually mistreats its employees, a major discrepancy exists. If “truth” is a stated value, but lies are told to the people of the organization, that value has been violated. If “customer satisfaction” is a stated value, and customers are treated unfairly, then perhaps “customer

satisfaction” is really not a value at all. Whatever the value is, it must be modeled continually and consistently.

Modeling of values is a key to credibility. Credibility is the prerequisite to believability. Unless your people believe and trust their leader, they will not follow. But, they will not believe until they assign their leader a healthy measure of credibility. The best way to earn credibility is to consistently model stated values. Conversely, the quickest way to lose credibility is to violate stated values.

Habitual modeling of values also serves the leader for the future. As a leader looks to future possibilities, each possibility is examined through the lens of values. If a dream violates the values stated personally or corporately, the dream is not right. It must be set aside and replaced with one that is consistent with values. The world is full of dreams and possibilities. So many wonderful opportunities exist. Whichever we pursue is, in part, determined by our value system. Suppose a company researched a new product and found it to be sellable and potentially very profitable. Suppose also they determined that the product had a high probability of being unreliable. If this company stated “customer satisfaction” as a basic value, what decision must they make? The decision is obvious. The product must not be offered until it is made reliable. If it cannot be made reliable, the value of customer satisfaction mandates an end to the product.

Values are a part of the leadership foundation. In the beginning of leadership, personal and organizational values must be established. Without clear understanding and modeling of these values, the leader sacrifices credibility and charts dangerous pathways for the future.

Leadership Lessons

- Successful leadership is always value-centered leadership.
- Values are those items which are held in utmost, unwavering importance.
- Modeling stated values is the secret to credibility.
- Decisions for the present and visions for the future must always be consistent with the stated value system.

VISION

If leadership is a dynamic process of moving people forward, then someone must describe what “forward” really means. Where is it? Where specifically is the leader trying to take the people. Developing a clear view of what the future is to look like is a primary part of being a leader. A leader must be able to look forward and create a healthy vision for the future. Without vision, there is no place to go. And if there is no place to go, there seems to be little need for a leader to lead. If there is no place to go, all that remains is the necessity of managing present activities. A small amount of investigation reveals the futility of living without vision. People everywhere are in need of it. In most cases, people and organizations are starving for it.

Leaders must cast vision for the future. The leader looks into the future and sees something most others may never see. He or she takes that picture of the future and puts it in words to communicate so others can share it. As stated earlier, a correct vision is that which is totally consistent with mission and values. Mission and values define who you are, vision defines where you are going and what you will become. Vision defines progress.

A common struggle in leadership studies occurs at this point. There seems to be a fine line between mission and vision. In reality, vision is a subset of mission. Mission is broad, farsighted, and relates to the basic

reason for existence. Vision is narrow and more focused. It relates to a more immediate thrust for the near future.

Over time, an individual or organization can have many visions within one primary mission. In the late 1960's, Mr. Packard, of Hewlett-Packard, began to cast a vision of a scientific calculator that would fit into a shirt pocket. It would be a calculator that would be able to calculate trigonometric and logarithmic functions. Within a few years, Hewlett-Packard had revolutionized the calculator industry with a new calculator called the HP-35. That vision for a shirt pocket, scientific calculator was not the primary reason for Hewlett-Packard's existence. It was only a small part of their overall mission.

When President John Kennedy announced his vision of putting a man on the moon, that was not the reason for existence as a nation. This nation was and is greater and more complex than one item of space exploration. Kennedy's vision was only one vision among many that grew out of America's mission.

Texas Instruments is an outstanding company with a mission to make and market useful products and services to satisfy needs of customers throughout the world. Within that mission, its leaders have cast many visions. They pursued a vision of creating and manufacturing transistors and ultimately created the first transistor radio. They pursued the development of laser technology for defense weapons. Texas Instruments created a vision for calculators, learning aids, and computers. Each vision was consistent with its mission. If you examine a chronological list of Texas Instrument's visions, it is evident that its visions expanded over time to fulfill the worldwide scope of its mission.

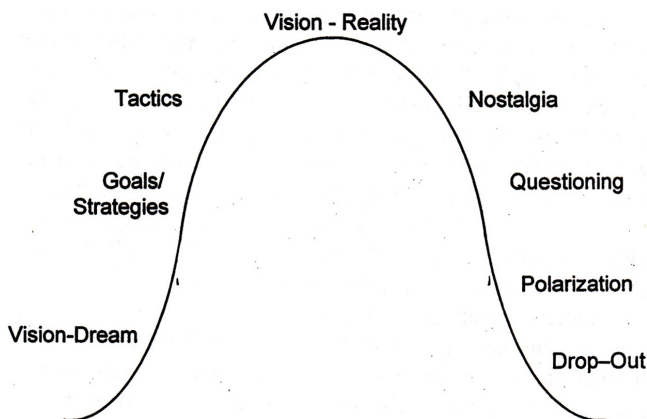
When Lee Iaccoca took over Chrysler Corporation, he did not change the mission of that company. Rather, he gave them a new vision that was consistent with its mission. He introduced a mini-van. It was a revolutionary new idea for family transportation. The pursuit of that vision gave new hope and new life to Chrysler Corporation. As the vision became a reality, new profits and a new future were the results.

The United States Forest Service has the mission of preserving and conserving forest lands, range lands, wetlands and associated wildlife. While that is its overall mission, each of these areas may have a specific vision. The vision for the next five years for timber producing forest may be totally different from the vision for wetlands, yet both may reside well under the overall mission of the United States Forest Service.

Mission and vision are inseparable. Without vision, a mission is never fulfilled. Without an understanding of mission and values, the leader may pursue a vision which may take followers on a misguided and possibly even fatal journey.

Proper understanding of mission, values and vision is crucial for every leader. At times, the lines between the three are not distinct. They have a tendency to overlap and interweave both in concept and application. It is another reason why becoming a leader is not an exact science. With time, study and reflection, a leader begins to gain an intuitive understanding of mission and values. Vision, then, is born out of that understanding, and, suddenly, they all fit together. When the “fit” finally takes place, it all looks so simple. The leader understands it has been far from simple!

To aid in understanding the value of vision, consider the following model:



It gives insight into the life cycle and leadership demands of organizations, families and individuals.

Vision–Dream: The model begins with vision. Vision is that step in which the immediate or foreseeable future is described by the leader. Vision brings new life. It is the rope all members of the team can hold onto. Vision becomes the heart of teamwork. It is the beginning of progress. When vision is consistent with mission and values and when it is shared by all members of the organization, it becomes the starting point of all forward movement or progress.

Everything starts with a dream or vision. The Boulder Dam began as an idea or dream of an engineer named Arthur Davis. It was the dream of Cutzon Broglum to carve the likeness of four American presidents on the face of Mount Rushmore. Every local church had its start as the dream or vision of people wanting to locate a new

congregation in that area. Our nation's colleges and universities began as a dream.

Some dreams are born out of adversity. Others are born out of necessity, and many come from the brilliant imaginations of creative people. Think of all the ideas that have been born out of wars. It was the experience of WWII that produced the idea of mounting radar detection equipment in aircraft. It was also WWII that brought the idea of Ground Control Approach. Today, it is an everyday experience for pilots to be monitored by radar and tracked down to a safe landing by air traffic controllers. But, it was the need of WWII that produced the idea. And finally, but best known to each of us is the nuclear bomb and nuclear energy. It was while this nation of America was threatened with war that the dream of an atomic bomb was born and brought to reality. One of the buildings at Lubbock Christian University was a part of the original facility in New Mexico where that first bomb was developed.

Consider those dreams that have been born out of necessity. After World War II, a young man named Kyle Moore was struggling for survival in the farming areas of western Oklahoma. After graduating from high school and engaging in a variety of work experiences, he began to study and learn the trade of watch repair. The new trade led him to Shattuk, Oklahoma. Shattuk was and is a small, rural community. Kyle and his wife, Pat, opened a jewelry store. It was during the time when television was becoming more and more popular. Shattuk was far removed from the television broadcast centers and even tall antennas would not bring clear reception. Those conditions inspired Kyle and others to think of cable television. Though cable TV is big business today, in the late 1950's, little was known about successful cable

systems. Kyle Moore left the jewelry business and began to build a cable system in the small town. His first system proved to be a great success. Soon, he began to build other systems. Kyle Moore went on to leave a giant mark in the Cable TV industry. It all started with a dream or idea born of necessity.

Many circumstances stimulate the powerful process of dreaming. The important thing to understand and remember is, regardless of one's reason, vision must be consistent with mission and values, and vision is the beginning point for all progress.

Goals/Strategies: Once a clear vision is set, consistent with values and mission, the next step is to set goals and strategies. Goals tend to define how much of the vision is to become reality. Goals are measurable and determine what is to be accomplished. Strategies are methods and procedures designed to make the vision a reality. They are plans which determine how you proceed.

There is some question about which comes first. Suppose a university wanted to better position itself for the future. More students and additional endowment may be key items for the future. Now, suppose the opportunity is given to create a new Environmental Science program. Is the Environmental Science program a strategy or a goal? Sometimes the two are so related they are difficult to separate.

Suppose a person's vision is to improve personal health. A strategy might be to weigh less. Losing weight might benefit the heart and lower blood pressure. A goal would then be a statement of how thin the person would want to become. Perhaps the goal would be to lose ten pounds. In this illustration, the strategy preceded the

goal. However, if we started with a stated vision of becoming thin, perhaps the next step would be a goal of ten pounds, and the final step would be to set some strategy for obtaining the goal

It is easy to see from this discussion that words and their placement can shift meaning. Perhaps that is one reason leadership is not an exact science. It is an understanding and implementation of many general concepts. The key concept of this discussion is the necessity of setting goals and strategies in order to make the vision become a reality. Exact methodology may not be too important.

One final thought is that the area of goals and strategies is the place in the process where people begin to really focus. Focusing is critical to making dreams come true. Without intent focus, most dreams remain distant wishes.

Tactics: Tactics may be defined as short term or more specific strategies. They are the methods of actually implementing the plan. If the strategy is to lose weight in order to acquire better health, what tactic should be used? Slimfast, Slender, Weight Watchers, Nutri-systems, California diet, more exercise, no sweets - there are many possible tactics. Any one of these tactics may accomplish the end result of losing ten pounds of weight. Therefore, which tactic one chooses may not be a matter of great importance.

People are all different. Each person is equipped with special strengths, abilities and interests. The way a person pursues a particular strategy or goal will seldom be as important as the goal itself. Successful leaders have the self confidence and leadership skill to allow people to develop their own tactics for a particular assignment.

Basic empowerment of people begins here. As people experience personal growth and development, empowerment may also mean that they become involved in more than tactics. They may begin to be a part of the setting of goals and strategies.

Vision–reality: It is at the top of the curve that dreams come true. Good dreams, focused upon with proper goals and strategies do, over time, come true. Leaders must be results oriented. Without results, there are no profits. Without results, the mission fails. Effective leaders, however, understand results come by way of clear vision that is consistent with basic mission and values. Successful leaders then ensure that proper goals and strategies are put in place in order to allow the entire organization to focus on making the common vision a reality. Successful leaders are never surprised when sound leadership principles bring the desired results.

Life on the left side of the curve is fun and exciting. Individuals and organizations who operate on the left side of the curve are optimistic and positive. It makes sense. Those who actively pursue a dream are the happier, more energetic, more fulfilled ones among us.

It also becomes the key to teamwork. Everyone seems to be talking about teamwork. What makes a good team? What draws a team together? There are many principles of successful human relationships that go into good team dynamics, but the most important key to teamwork is shared vision and proclaimed values.

The bad news of all of this is that few people or organizations live on the left side of the curve. Most operate without clearly understanding any kind of values system. They never really know what the vision and direction are to be. It is not surprising that these are the

people who are prone to discouragement and frustration. The words on the right side of the curve depict a steady decline of life without vision.

Nostalgia: As people and organizations begin to slip down the right side of the curve, the first symptom will be nostalgia. They find themselves reflecting on better days gone by. A wife may find herself wishing she could return to the time when she was first married or when the children were small. A researcher may find himself thinking back to the days when funding agencies realized the real importance of research. A church may look back to the time when growth was rapid and wish for a return to such a wonderful time of the past.

Obviously, nostalgia creates two great problems. First, it is impossible to return. No one can go back to the way it used to be. God has designed us so that time keeps marching on and allows no true return. Secondly, even if we could go back, it would not be the same. Somehow the past is not exactly as we remember it. The tendency is to remember selected parts and not all of the past. If we could go back, certainly, it would not be as we remembered.

Questioning: Continuing down the curve leads to questioning. A nostalgic person soon questions the present. These questions indicate doubt and frustration. A wife might question whether her husband will ever mature. A son might question the direction of the father. A member of the church might question if the preacher really knows how to preach. Employees question the decisions and motivations of the supervisor. This questioning is when frustrations are verbalized.

Polarization: Life on the right side of the curve is a steady fall. From questioning, polarization follows.

People who become polarized have major problems in communication. They appear to be disagreeable to almost every group function. They give every impression of not wanting to be where they are.

Drop-out: The last step on the right side is dropout. People will not stay in a mode of questioning and polarization forever. They eventually give up. All of us are aware of marriages where one or both of the partners gave up. It is easy to find athletes who have finally dropped out of the team. Employees may finally reach the point where they quit. Church members will eventually leave if they stay on the right side of the curve long enough.

Because life on the right side of the curve is frustrating and discouraging, a major objective of all people should be to move immediately from the right to the left side. Life is too short to waste in frustration. Every person deserves the right to choose to live on the left side of the curve. More than that, every person deserves the right to know how to live on the left side of the curve.

The only effective way to move from the right to left side is to obtain a new vision or dream. People who are nostalgic, questioning, frustrated or about to drop out need a new dream. New dreams invigorate and excite! New vision gives hope and purpose. Goals and strategies allow us to focus on making the dream come true.

For married couples, there are key times to dream again. When the first child is born, it is a wonderful time to stop and dream. When the youngest child goes to school, goes off to college, or gets married; or when retirement comes, are all excellent times to dream again. Institutions as well as families must learn the value of

dreaming new dreams. Life is best when lived on the left side of the curve.

An outstanding example of all of this comes from the life of Solomon.⁴ Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba. David had been anointed king as a young boy. His heart was what God desired for the heart of a king. In the years to follow, David finally did become king over Israel. As a leader, he was excellent. His people loved him. During his years of leadership, Israel was blessed and profited greatly.

When David⁵ became old, he had still another great vision. The dream or vision was to build a temple. The temple would be a house for God which was exceedingly magnificent. While David had the vision, God would not allow him to see the vision come true. God allowed David to give the vision to his son who would follow him on the throne. That son was Solomon.⁶ When Solomon became king, his aged father gave him this great vision to build a house for God. Solomon embraced the vision with all of his heart.

For the first twenty years of Solomon's reign as king, he was intently focused on building the temple and a palace for himself. Scripture gives insight into Solomon's goals and strategies used to make the dream come true. For all of these years, Solomon was on the *left side of the curve*. The challenge and purpose of his vision resulted in a rich, full and very rewarding life. But after twenty years as king, the temple and palace were both completed. Things began to change. For Solomon, life was not as exciting and invigorating. If he is the one who wrote the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes.⁷ It is obvious that he was extremely frustrated. He questions almost everything. He is polarized and seems at times on the verge of dropout. The book of Ecclesiastes is clearly

written by a man who is not happy. Solomon's last twenty years seem to be spent on the right side of the curve.

Remember, the way from the right to the left side of the curve is a new vision. As we read the end of the story in the book of Ecclesiastes, it seems Solomon recovered. He proclaims that the best for man is found in fearing God and keeping his commands. Perhaps, Solomon renewed his vision of God's will for man and returned to a quality of life God intended for each of us.

Leadership Lessons

- The starting place for a happy, full life is a dream or vision.
- Successful leaders are forward-looking or visionary.
- The job of a leader is to supply vision to followers. Without vision, individuals are left only to manage and maintain the status quo.
- Vision must be consistent with mission and values.
- Goals and strategies are the focusing tools that make visions come true.
- To move from the right side of the curve to the left, you must have a new vision.