



LEADERSTEP

BECOMING A KINGDOM LEADER

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LEADERSTEP

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SESSION ONE

SESSION ONE NOTES

Who do you think of when you hear the word **"leader?"** Write their name in the space provided.

Repent means to _____ .

What is a kingdom leader?
A kingdom leader is someone who brings heaven to earth today.

Kingdom:

Leader:

Read along with Genesis 1:26-28. **Circle** the responsibilities given to Adam and Eve in the garden in 1:28.

²⁶ God said, "Let Us [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] make mankind in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the [tame] beasts, and over all of the earth, and over everything that creeps upon the earth."

²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it [using all its vast resources in the service of God and man]; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth." [AMPC]

Brings heaven to earth today:

Heaven:

Earth:

Identifying your personal spheres of influence

Circle the spheres of influence you engage with on a regular basis where you live, learn, work, play, and worship. Write in any other groups you engage in the space provided.

Family	Government	Education	Business
Immediate family Extended family	National government State government Local government Local law enforcement	Classmates Teachers & professors Administrators PTA Booster Club	Co-workers Clients Vendors Professional organizations Industry connections
Arts & Entertainment	The Church	Science & Medicine	Personal
Social media Music Sports teams Hobbies Clubs & social organizations Dance Theater Visual arts Film	Small group Serve team Christian care & relief efforts Missions	Doctors, specialists Vet Patients Researchers	Friends Vendors (hair salon, lawn care, etc.) Neighbors Gym or fitness facilities

Ask God which of these spheres He has called you to intentionally serve and influence right now. List the three priorities for you in this season of life.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Today:

A kingdom leader is someone who brings heaven to earth today. Because of Jesus, I am a kingdom leader.

INTRODUCTION

Who is the first person you think of when you read or hear the word LEADER? Who does the word LEADER bring to mind?

Maybe your mind goes to the president of a company or country. Or maybe you think of a team captain or teacher. Maybe you think of someone you work for or someone in your family or neighborhood. Go ahead and write their names, titles, and where they lead here:

What made you choose the people you wrote down? Why do you think they are leaders?

Want to know who we think of first when we hear the word LEADER?



And we're not alone. God thinks of you as a leader, too.

In fact, we believe because of God, our good Father, you aren't just a leader. We believe you're a KINGDOM LEADER.

Now, you may be thinking:

"Oh, not me! I don't have what it takes to lead something!"

OR-

"Leadership is for someone else. I'm content being a follower, thank you very much."

OR-

"I'm just the *leader* by default. Nobody else would step up."

OR-

"It's just my job; it's not who I am."

OR-

"You must have mistaken me for a member of the Royal Family. I don't have a kingdom to lead."

Why do most of us resist the leader label? Why is this truth so hard for us to believe?

Most of us resist the idea of being a kingdom leader because our way of thinking is skewed. Our perception of what a leader is and isn't is based on what others have told us and how our experiences have shaped us.

Too often, we think leadership is only for other people who have a title beside their name. The person at the top of the organizational chart? They must be a leader. The person with over 30 years of experience in their industry? Clearly a leader. The person with enough money to make things happen? Obviously a leader. Most of us believe leadership is only about expertise, experience, position, and power. This means most of us have had it wrong about leadership. All wrong.

In the Scriptures, we see the word **repent**, which comes from the Greek word "metanoëó" which means "to be changed after being with" or to "think differently after." Or to say it more simply, **repent** means to change your thinking (*Matthew 4:17, Romans 2:4*). When we change our minds on a matter, we shift from one perspective to another, from one way of thinking about an issue to a different one altogether. To **repent** and **change our thinking** about something takes time and intentionality.

For example: have you ever moved to a new location and then accidentally given out your old address for pizza delivery? Your giving out the old address didn't change the fact that you now lived at the new place, did it? In all likelihood, when you first moved you had to remind yourself to use your new address for everyday things like driving home, filling out a form, or ordering takeout. It takes time and intentionality for the new to become the norm.

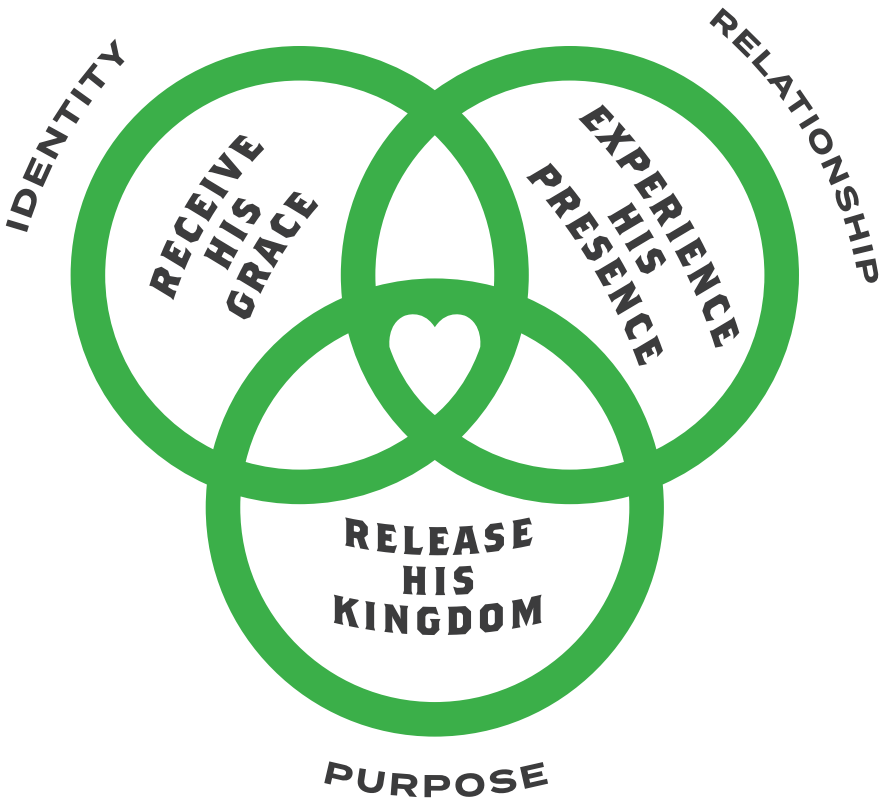
Repent: To change your thinking
 It takes time and intentionality for the new to become the norm.

The same is true about our new identity: it takes time and intentionality to **repent** and switch to a new way of thinking. Because we are new creations in Christ, we now have the mind of Christ (*2 Corinthians 5:17*). This means we can choose to come into agreement with God—to believe the superior truths He tells us about ourselves. Truths like:

- **We are His beloved sons and daughters.**
1 John 3:1
- **We are forgiven because of Jesus.**
Ephesians 1:7
- **We were created on purpose for a purpose.**
Ephesians 2:10
- **We are His delegated authority on earth.**
Matthew 28:18-20

It's these truths about our identity that ultimately determine our purpose. **Who we think we are determines what we do and how we live.**

THE FATHER'S HEART



At Valley Creek, we use the *three circles* to explain our three values. We want to continually receive His grace, experience His presence, and release His kingdom. These values could also be stated as: our identity in Christ, our relationship with our good Father, and our purpose in His kingdom. At the center of these three values, at the center of it all, is the Father's Heart.

As we continue to take next steps on our journey with Jesus, we embrace more fully our identity as a beloved son or daughter. This leads to a deeper relationship with our good Father, and then to

discovering more of our purpose. This is the pathway to purpose: when I know who He is, I know who I am. Because who we are (identity) determines what we do (purpose).

Let's look at the following examples of identity and purpose.

IDENTITY	PURPOSE
Fish	Swim
Birds	Fly
Cheetahs	Run
Leaders	Lead

Each of these examples shows how their created identity matches up with their created potential through what they do (purpose). What a miss it would be for a majestic spearfish to simply float along and never glide through the ocean's waters. What a shame it would be for an eagle to stay perched on a high branch and never take flight! How disappointing to only ever see a cheetah walk from place to place when it was built for speed!

The same is true for you.

What a loss it would be for the world if you never embrace your identity and step into your potential. Our God has created you, and invited you, to lead.

Will you **repent** and change your thinking about leadership?
Will you accept His invitation and choose to lead?

All of creation is desperate for you to say, "Yes."

WHAT IS A KINGDOM LEADER?

Whether it's a blink-and-you-miss-it town or an infamous city, your birth certificate lists the location of your humble beginning. And yet, your story really had its start in the birthplace of creation. You see, you come from a long line of image bearers. And it was there in the garden that God made the first creations to bear His image: the man and the woman, Adam and Eve (*Genesis 1:26-28*).

Because Adam and Eve were made in His likeness, God gave them an extraordinary assignment: to serve as His delegated authority on earth. And it was good. For a while.

In *Genesis 3*, Satan tempted Adam and Eve to forsake their good Father. This temptation gave birth to sin, and Adam and Eve's sin broke the relationship between God and all of mankind. Adam and Eve gave over their delegated authority and all of creation felt the consequences of their choice.

Centuries of suffering and brokenness followed. The one who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy treated earth as his playground by breaking apart all that God had called "good" (*John 10:10*). Over and over, God's people cried out for deliverance and then turned their backs on Him in defiance. Imperfect efforts at restoring relationship and compensating for sin resulted in hearts becoming enslaved to the law and the liar. Darkness reigned in the world created by the Light.

And then, in God's perfect timing, the King of Kings showed up: Jesus.

Because of Adam, I was naked and ashamed.

Because of Jesus, I am now clothed and blameless.

Because of Adam, I was working hard to measure up.

Because of Jesus, I can rest in His finished work.

Because of Adam, I was a slave to sin.

Because of Jesus, I am now forgiven and free.

If we were leaders in Adam how much more are we now leaders in Jesus (*Romans 5:17*)? We have more in Jesus than we ever lost in Adam. Jesus reclaimed our God-given authority. Jesus brought redemption, salvation, and victory over Satan's schemes. Jesus' resurrection defeated the death and destruction brought on by the evil one. Jesus has gone ahead to prepare a place for us with Him in Heaven (*John 14:3*). Jesus will come again one day to establish His kingdom here on earth (*Matthew 24:42-44*).

But between now and then, Jesus has given the keys of His kingdom to us, you and me (*Matthew 16:19*). We are now empowered to destroy the works of the devil by bringing Jesus' resurrection power, hope, and victory everywhere we go. Because of Jesus, we can bring the realities of heaven to our earthly circumstances.

This is kingdom leadership.

A kingdom leader is someone who brings heaven to earth today.

Let's break down our kingdom leader definition to bring more clarity and meaning.

A kingdom leader is someone who brings heaven to earth today.

What is the kingdom of God? More than just a destination we will arrive at someday, God's kingdom extends beyond the location. When we refer to the *kingdom* we are referring to the spiritual world of which God is King (*Matthew 6:33*). The kingdom is the rule and reign of God, where His will is done and complete. With this expanded definition, we are now part of something much bigger than ourselves: a kingdom with a scope beyond the horizons we can see, power beyond our physical ability, and a legacy that lasts into eternity.

Because of Christ's finished work and gift of grace, we are now citizens of the kingdom of heaven (*Ephesians 2:8*). This means:

- **We are sons and daughters of the King.**
Romans 8:15
- **Jesus is always with us.**
Matthew 28:19-20
- **The same Holy Spirit power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in and through us.**
Romans 8:11
- **We are His royal ambassadors and are leading on His behalf.**
2 Corinthians 5:20, John 20:21, Matthew 5:16
- **We are building His kingdom, not ours.**
Matthew 6:10, Luke 4:43

Unlike our home address with its fixed location and limited privileges, God's kingdom goes with us everywhere we go granting access to the heavenly realms here on earth. This new kingdom authority gives both power and purpose beyond anything we have experienced before (*Ephesians 2:6-10*).

What a way to live and lead!

A kingdom **leader** is someone who brings heaven to earth today.

You and I were made in the image and likeness of God. Just like any children, we each resemble our good Father in different ways. For example:

- Jodie's care for people in distress shows us the Father's Heart for His children.
- Brian's ability to create a collaborative corporate plan shows us how our King brings order to chaos.
- Christy's creative artwork gives a glimpse of our Creator's outlook.
- Mark's conscientious work reminds us not a single detail goes unnoticed to our detail-oriented God.

We believe leadership was part of your original created design. Let's take a look at what Scripture says about the roles and responsibilities given to Adam and Eve in the garden in Genesis 1:26-28.

Genesis 1:26-28

²⁶ God said, "Let Us [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] make mankind in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the [tame] beasts, and over all of the earth, and over everything that creeps upon the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it [using all its vast resources in the service of God and man]; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth." [AMPC]

While we each reflect God's image in a unique way, we were all created to rule and reign. *Genesis 1:28* outlines the responsibilities of our created purpose:

- **Be fruitful:**
Live a life of productive beauty and bring things to their fullest potential.
- **Multiply:**
Reproduce the life of God that's in you into the lives of others.
- **Fill the earth:**
Impart to the areas of your influence the knowledge of the glory and goodness of God.
- **Subdue it:**
Bring order where there is chaos and alignment with the kingdom of God.
- **Use its vast resources in the service of God and man:**
Use your time, talents, and treasures to accomplish God's purposes in the lives of man.

In other words, we were created to lead.

To reign in life does not mean ruling over people, but quite the opposite: we become empowered to serve others effectively. Because of Christ, we have a servant's heart with a leader's hands. We rule and reign for the glory of God and the benefit of those around us (*Mark 10:45*).

You have all that you need to receive and embrace your role as a kingdom leader. You have authority, anointing, calling, and gifting. God will not send you to do something He has not empowered you to do (*Matthew 16:19, Ephesians 2:10, Galatians 2:20*).

A kingdom leader is someone who brings heaven to earth today.

What keys do you have on your keychain? Keys are full of tremendous potential because they represent authority and access. Keys hold the power to unlock and release the unseen.

In *Matthew 16:19*, Jesus says, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” When Jesus gave us the keys to the kingdom, He empowered us with authority to access heaven and bring it to earth. He has given us unending access to that which belongs to Him. And He renewed our created authority given to us in the garden (*Genesis 1:26*). But it takes faith to use the authority He has given us.

Our identity is received, but our authority must be exercised. His keys don’t belong in our pockets. We are to use them. All of creation is eagerly waiting for the children of God to use the keys that unlock the treasures of heaven!

All of creation is eagerly waiting for the children of God to use the keys that unlock the treasures of heaven.

Because of our identity as beloved sons and daughters, and our relationship with Jesus, we can live out our kingdom releasing purpose: to bring heaven to earth today.

A kingdom leader is someone who brings **heaven to earth today.**

When we speak of bringing heaven to earth, we want to bring God's perspective and power to every situation: bringing heavenly realities to earthly circumstances.

The following are just a few of the realities of heaven:

- **Victory is won.**
1 Corinthians 15:54-57
- **Love is present.**
1 John 4:8
- **Joy is fulfilled.**
Psalm 16:11, Revelation 21:4
- **Everything is in order.**
1 Corinthians 14:33
- **Relationships are reconciled.**
2 Corinthians 5:18-19
- **Honor is given.**
Isaiah 6:3

Your keys unlock the door to let the realities of the kingdom of heaven invade earth. We must always remember: **heaven influences earth—earth does not influence heaven.** Therefore, when you live from heaven to earth instead of earth to heaven, you are by nature a leader. Kingdom leaders invite the influence of heaven into their leadership and their thinking. Adopting a kingdom mindset requires us to **repent** and change our point of view (*Matthew 4:17*). When we have our good Father's heavenly perspective and bring His redemptive power to a hopeless situation, look out. *That is kingdom leadership!*

A kingdom leader is someone who brings heaven to **earth today.**

Our world is organized by systems that shape countries and their cultures. These spheres of influence shape the way people live and think. Kingdom leaders engage these spheres of influence with God's perspective in order for true transformation to take place.

The following are broad boundaries of these influential fields:

- **Family**
- **Government**
- **Education**
- **Business**
- **Arts & Entertainment**
- **The Church**
- **Science & Medicine**

We each have unique spheres of influence within our geographical location and our personal connections. For example, consider the different people impacted by three different people in the Bible: Joseph, the Samaritan woman, and a Roman centurion. Joseph influenced the prisoners and guards in the jail, the Egyptian pharaoh and his household, and future Israelites (*Genesis 39*). The Samaritan woman who meets Jesus at the well tells her whole village about her encounter with Jesus and His living water (*John 4:39*). The Roman centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant had military connections and Roman privileges (*Matthew 8:5-13*). Each of these biblical characters had distinct groups of folks they knew and influenced.

You were created to be a leader, but not necessarily qualified for, or invited to, every opportunity and sphere of influence. Just as the Samaritan woman did not have access to the Roman military, the centurion did not have connections to the Samaritan village. We may see an opportunity (a need, an injustice, an idea) but it may be someone else's assignment. We need to be diligent to ask our good Father where the boundary lines are for our spheres of influence in this season (*Psalms 16*).

For kingdom leaders, it's not about *how many* people you lead, but *how well* you lead them. The priority is on being intentional with those in YOUR spheres of influence.

A kingdom leader is someone who brings heaven to earth *today*.

In our kingdom leader definition, we use the word today because there is an urgency to our calling. Much like Esther was invited to step into a time-sensitive assignment (*Esther 4:14*), we too have an invitation to respond to our own leadership calling without delay (*Luke 21:31, Matthew 24:31-32*).

James 4:14 says our lives are like a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Our days are numbered; therefore, we must number our days (*Psalms 90:12*). When we ignore the invitation or drag our feet, we miss out on living into our potential. When we respond decisively and immediately, we have the opportunity to partner with God in His redemptive work in the world.

When considering the urgency of your leadership calling, ask yourself these questions: if not me, who? If not now, when?

Our good Father believes in you so much, He has entrusted you with His kingdom. He loves you and wants the best for you: for you to live into your created leadership potential.

Remember: repentance means to change our thinking. When we **repent**, we choose to replace the lies with God's truth. Make this prayer of repentance your own:

Good Father, I choose to believe I am a kingdom leader. I know this identity has nothing to do with anything I can do and everything to do with what Jesus has done. I choose to believe you created me on purpose for a purpose. I choose to believe you appointed me as your delegated authority. I choose to believe you empowered me and commissioned me to bring heaven to earth today. Because of you, I know I am a Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, life-giving leader. Draw me closer to your heart today. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- **A kingdom leader is someone who brings heaven to earth today.**
- **All of creation is eagerly awaiting the children of God to use the keys that unlock the treasures of heaven.**
- **Heaven influences earth—earth does not influence heaven.**
- **Kingdom leaders are different from ordinary leaders because of our anointing, perspective, and assignment.**

QUESTIONS FOR MY ASSESSMENT & ACTION

What is getting in the way of accepting your identity as a kingdom leader?

Read the following verses and then choose one to rewrite in your own words in the space provided. Allow this verse to serve as a personal reminder of your calling.

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit...

John 15:16

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.

John 20:21

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10



SESSION TWO

A kingdom leader is someone who brings heaven to earth today.

At Valley Creek, we think kingdom leaders are different from ordinary leaders because of our anointing, perspective, and assignment. We have the opportunity to build God's kingdom in each of our spheres of influence like school, home, work, and play.

As we studied the kingdom leaders we know, we realized that while each was unique, they each took a similar approach. We broke this approach down into what we see as five consistent practices of kingdom leaders. These practices are the natural overflow (the what) of a healthy identity in Jesus (the who).

On the following pages, we will dive deeper into each of these practices. Together we will discover what each action looks like with examples from Scripture that breathe life into the whole idea.

5 PRACTICES OF A KINGDOM LEADER

- 1. SEE THE VISION.** Kingdom leaders dream with God and see His perspective in every situation.

[VISION]

- 2. GO FIRST.** Kingdom leaders pave the way with courage and conviction.

[INITIATIVE]

- 3. DEVELOP OTHERS.** Kingdom leaders intentionally invest in the potential of people.

[MULTIPLY]

- 4. MAKE IT HAPPEN.** Kingdom leaders embrace authority and responsibility for relationships and results.

[OWNERSHIP]

- 5. TAKE NEXT STEPS.** Kingdom leaders pursue growth in every aspect of their lives.

[MOMENTUM]

SESSION TWO NOTES

Kingdom Leader Practice #1: See the vision.

Kingdom leaders dream with God and see His perspective in every situation.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:23-24

Take a moment and use the words of *Psalm 139:23-24* as your own prayer and write it out in the space below. Ask God to show you any areas of personal pride that might be blocking your view of His dream.

Kingdom Leader Practice #2: Go first.

Kingdom leaders pave the way with courage and conviction.

God is always with us. Underline this truth in the verses below.

I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

Psalm 23:4

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;

Zephaniah 3:17

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9

...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:20

He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. ... for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

1 Corinthians 3:16

Where is God inviting me to go first?

SEE THE VISION

[VISION]

Kingdom Leader Practice #1: See the vision.

Kingdom leaders dream with God and see His perspective in every situation.

Have you ever had your vision impaired in some way? Maybe your vision was blurry or you saw spots or strange colors? Maybe you were blindfolded or in a place that was pitch dark? How did this affect your ability to see where you were and where you were going?

Describe your experience here.

Just like our physical vision, our leadership vision impacts our perception of reality and our ability to function. Take a look at these two versions of the first half of *Proverbs 29:18*:

- Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint... (NIV)
- Where there is no vision, the people perish... (KJV)

In your own words, share what happens to us when we are without vision?

Leadership vision is being able to see *what should be* in the midst of *what currently is*. Vision inspires us, guides us, and helps us see our next steps. It tells us what we are going to do and what we are not going to do. Vision is revelation from God that constrains us. It serves as guardrails to keep us from going off course.

For example, the vision for Valley Creek is to help people take the next step on their journey with Jesus. This filter helps us say no to good initiatives that may not be the best investment of the time, talents, and treasures God has asked us to steward. Our vision helps us see distractions for what they are and keeps us focused on His specific invitations for our church family.

But how do we go about seeing the vision in the first place? Determining the overall vision for your organization, your family, your community, or your life can be a daunting task. Thankfully, a kingdom leader is invited to partner with the King's vision, to dream with God, and see the world around us from His perspective.

Perspective is your way of seeing things, or your point of view. Kingdom leaders dream with God and adopt His mindset, or point of view, on the situations around them. This requires us to **repent** and make a change from our typical way of thinking (*Matthew 4:17*).

In addition to the hard realities we see around us, with God's perspective we also see the completed redemption—the created potential. *2 Corinthians 4:18* puts it beautifully, "We look not to the things seen but to the things that are unseen." We adopt God's perspective when we look past a person's physical condition to see their heart condition, or past the circumstances to see the underlying issue (*1 Samuel 16:7*). Because we see God's created potential in people

Ephesians 1:11-12

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone. [MSG]

and places, we bring hope to what seem like hopeless situations (*Psalm 62:5, Romans 8:24, Romans 15:4*).

We don't have to stress and struggle to come up with a vision: God gives it to us freely (*Revelation 1:1-2, Acts 10:9-23, James 1:5*). This takes the pressure off of us. Throughout the Scriptures we see God invite leaders to share the vision He has for His people.

For example, God shared with Moses His dream for bringing the Israelites out of slavery and into the Promised Land (*Exodus 3*). God then provided everything Moses needed to lead the people through some of the most dramatic events in all of human history. Not the least of which was His provision of a physical guide to follow in the desert: the cloud by day and the fire by night (*Exodus 13:21*).

God shared with Jesus His dream for restoring relationships with His sons and daughters and redeeming mankind once and for all. As Jesus fulfilled God's dream on earth, He never ignored the Father's direction or took on His own dream, but stayed focused on God and His vision. In *John 5:19*, Jesus said He only did what He saw the Father doing.

Both of these examples point to this leadership truth: extraordinary leaders are extraordinary followers. Moses and Jesus saw God's vision and faithfully followed Him to make it a reality. Those who submit to God's authority in their life lead from His authority on this earth.

Recommended Resource

Follow The Cloud by John Stickl

Valley Creek has adopted the saying "follow the Cloud" from the Exodus story. We look to God to give direction for all of our next steps. Whether He goes fast or slow, we want to go only where God goes before us; we want to follow the Cloud.

In this book Pastor John shares our family's story discovering how to hear God's voice and embrace a life of freedom.

It's not enough to see the vision for ourselves; for vision to impact others we must communicate it to those we are leading. If you can't clearly articulate where you are leading, how can anyone follow you?

The following are four characteristics of a well-defined vision:

- 1. Clear:** For vision to be carried out, it must be plain as day to everyone involved. If it's fuzzy to you, it's positively blurry to those behind you.
- 2. Concise:** For vision to be passed along, it must be portable. Avoid lengthy explanations and stick with short, simple statements.
- 3. Consistent:** For vision to stick, it has to be dependable. Use the same wording over and over so others recognize and remember it.
- 4. Compelling:** For vision to fuel the hard times, it must be inspiring. Choose vocabulary that speaks to the value of the preferred future.

The reason Jesus and Moses could submit to God's authority was because they led from a place of humility. Kingdom leaders lead with a humble heart, desiring God's perspective (*James 4:10*). Dreaming with God requires honesty about our own agenda and a surrender of the desires of our heart (*Matthew 26:42*). Without careful examination of our motives, we could miss His dream for the pursuit of our own. Three common misguided motives are all rooted in pride: power, achievement, and ambition.

Before we dream with God, we must prepare our hearts. With practice, we learn to lay down our pride and preferences in order to receive God's plans (*Matthew 6:33*).

When we have prepared our hearts to dream with God, our next steps are to **Ask, Listen, and Respond.**

- **We ASK:** What is God's perspective on this situation? What does He want to redeem, restore, and renew?
Proverbs 16:9, Jeremiah 29:11-13
 - **We LISTEN:** What whisper do I hear from God? What sacred echo do I seem to hear in my prayer time, Bible reading, and conversations with godly relationships?
 - **We RESPOND:** What next step is God inviting me to take to join Him in this life-giving work?
Psalms 37:23
-

Kingdom leaders hear God's voice and follow. *Romans 10:17* says faith comes by hearing. The faith we need to lead comes by first listening to His voice.

Think of a specific situation needing breakthrough in your home, community, or workplace. Describe it in detail:

- What are the challenges?
- Where does it look hopeless?
- Where is God at work?

Now practice dreaming with God and seeing His vision. Set aside time to Ask, Listen, and Respond using the questions mentioned on the previous page. What is God's vision for that situation? Capture any new insights or whispers from God in the space provided.

Recommended Resource

Whisper Message Series

To learn more about hearing God, listen to or watch the Whisper message series online. valleycreek.org/media

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- **See the vision. Kingdom leaders dream with God and see His perspective in every situation.**
- **Leadership vision is being able to see what should be in the midst of what currently is.**
- **Extraordinary leaders are extraordinary followers.**

QUESTIONS FOR MY ASSESSMENT & ACTION

Do I have a God-given vision for the areas I lead? If yes, what is it?

If no, what gets in the way of my dreaming with God?

Which of the following next steps do I need to take when it comes to seeing the vision?

- Ask, Listen, and Respond to God's voice.
- Communicate the vision I have received in a clear and concise way.
- Ensure my team members align to the vision with their words and actions.

GO FIRST

[INITIATIVE]

Kingdom Leader Practice #2: Go first.

Kingdom leaders pave the way with courage and conviction.

You've probably heard someone say, "Do as I say, not as I do." We've all heard the stories of a parent who wanted their child to avoid smoking but wasn't willing to quit smoking themselves. Or the boss who expected their team to put in extra hours around the office only so they could leave early. This saying is terribly true: often we want people to live by a standard we are not willing to uphold ourselves.

In life and leadership, the consistency of our character is central to our success. There are no shortcuts to integrity. You can teach what you know but you can only reproduce who you are. Our willingness to model what needs to happen creates momentum for others to adopt the same lifestyle.

This is yet another opportunity to **repent** and change the way we think about leadership (*Matthew 4:17*). We don't point the way; we pave the way. We lean into defining moments and determine what's next.

**Kingdom leaders don't point the way;
we pave the way.**

Simply said: You can't lead others to a place you are unwilling to go. Going first is a missional move: taking a next step so someone else can take theirs.

Let's take a deeper look at the pieces of this kingdom leadership principle.

Pave the way

Leaders go first at every crossroads. In Exodus, we see Moses went first on countless occasions. He was the first person since the garden to meet face to face with God (*Exodus 3:3-6*). Moses was the first to receive the vision of the Promised Land (*Exodus 3:8-10*) and the first to hear God's name (*Exodus 3:13-14*). And he went first to speak to pharaoh on God's behalf (*Exodus 5:1-4*).

In the Gospels, we see Jesus went first. He walked on water to meet the disciples in the middle of a storm (*Matthew 14:25-29*). He washed the disciples' feet (*John 13:1-17*). After His resurrection, Jesus pursued Peter to forgive and restore him to ministry (*John 21:1-19*). He even went first in seeking us out to offer us abundant life (*Luke 19:10, Revelation 3:20*)!

The same invitation is waiting for us. Christ's love compels us to go first (*2 Corinthians 5:14-15*). While it can be tempting to stay on the sidelines or look around for someone else to lead, the stakes are too high to wait for someone else to step up (*Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2 Corinthians 6:2, Romans 13:11*). The first time you choose to, "sit this one out," may not be a big deal. But over time, your missed opportunities add up to have a negative cumulative effect on your life.

Leaders don't wait; leaders initiate.

Leaders serve as a guide and pioneer (*Joshua 3:14-17*). By going first, you are creating a path for those behind you. Paving the way can look like building a bridge over a raging relationship river or clearing thick vines through a jungle of confusion. And sometimes paving the way looks like stepping out of our comfortable boat to walk on water while everyone else watches (*Matthew 14:29*).

With courage

Going first and paving the way for others can bring out the fear in the bravest of us! Even when we know what we need to do and where we need to lead, fear can make us freeze. We can end up feeling like Moses did in *Exodus 3:11* when he said, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” Thankfully, God’s presence with us makes us brave. In *Exodus 3:12*, God responds to Moses the same way He responds to us today, “I will be with you.”

Kingdom leaders go first even if it seems like we must go it alone. In those times, we cling to this truth: we are never alone. God is always with us.

I will fear no evil, for you are with me.

Psalm 23:4

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;

Zephaniah 3:17

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9

...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28:20

He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. ... for he lives with you and will be in you.

John 14:16-17

Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?

1 Corinthians 3:16

And conviction

When we know who is with us and we see clearly the vision before us, we can pave the way with conviction. Sometimes we might be the only one among many who believes in the potential instead of the pitfalls. This was definitely true of Caleb and Joshua. They were the only two of the dozen spies sent to scout the Promised Land who returned ready to march in and take what was rightfully theirs (*Numbers 14:6-9*).

Have you ever believed in something so strongly the conviction helped you push past your fear? This may have looked like:

- **Praying out loud in front of others.**
- **Confronting a bully at school or work.**
- **Presenting a controversial idea to a tough audience.**
- **Confessing a difficult truth to those you love.**
- **Inviting someone far from God to join you for worship.**
- **Protesting an unjust system.**
- **Speaking up about a hidden abuse.**

What other courageous examples from your own life would you add to this list?

Leader: your action in those brave moments made a difference. Even if the bully kept on bullying or the invitation was turned down, your courage impacted those who witnessed or heard about it. In *1 Corinthians 11:1*, Paul tells the church at Corinth, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." We trust the ultimate results to God knowing that He can use our small moments of obedience to create a tipping point for a kingdom movement!

2 Timothy 1:7 reminds us that God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self-control. We can take bold steps and push past our fear because our good Father is with us. This simple truth is worth repeating: **even when we go it alone, we are never alone.**

God's presence gives us courage and His vision brings conviction. When we dream with God and see a clear vision of the preferred future He has in mind, we are compelled to move forward. To sit still and accept status quo would actually be moving backward! When it comes to gut-level kingdom conviction, leaders believe so fiercely in the dream we feel we must respond, regardless of the risk or outcome (Mark 2:1-5).

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- **Go first. Kingdom leaders pave the way with courage and conviction.**
- **You can't lead others to a place you are unwilling to go.**
- **Leaders don't wait; leaders initiate.**
- **Even when we go it alone, we are never alone. God is always with us.**

QUESTIONS FOR MY ASSESSMENT & ACTION

Which of the following next steps do I need to take with courage and conviction?

- Look for ways to support my leader.
- Identify problems and present solutions.
- Apologize for a mistake and make it right.
- Be vulnerable in my leadership.



SESSION THREE

SESSION THREE NOTES

Who has paved the way for you?

Kingdom Leader Practice #3: Develop others.
Kingdom leaders intentionally invest in the potential of people.

Identify

Questions to answer to help you identify who to invest in:

- Who has God placed under my authority?
- Who has God placed in my sphere of influence in an unusual way?
- Who has asked me to share wisdom or experience? Who has seemed eager to grow?

Invite

Invest

- Who is God inviting me to invest in?
- What next step do I need to take to invite or invest?

Kingdom Practice #4: Make it happen.

Kingdom leaders embrace both authority and responsibility for relationships and results.

DEVELOP OTHERS

[MULTIPLY]

Kingdom Leader Practice #3: Develop others.

Kingdom leaders intentionally invest in the potential of people.

Consider for a moment the key characters in your leadership story. These would be people who have had significant impact on you and your journey. Some were a part of your life for only a short chapter. Others have been involved many years. These important individuals shaped your thinking, challenged your efforts, taught you valuable lessons, and gave you opportunities.

Write down a few of these key characters in your story and how they impacted your life. Take a moment to thank God for each person you listed. If possible, consider contacting them to thank them for the difference they made in your life.

The pages of our leadership stories are filled with the names of people chosen by our good Father to help us grow towards our created potential. Family members, teachers, pastors, coaches, friends, and co-workers who had our best in mind and never let us give up. What a gift!

Our grateful hearts for the generosity of others' investment in our lives stirs us to respond. As kingdom leaders, we have the opportunity to reproduce what was invested in us. God has chosen us to have that kind of impact in the lives of others.

Kingdom leaders **repent** and change the way we think about leadership development. We see this investment as a privilege, not a burden. Leadership development is not a program or event; leadership development is a lifestyle. Investing in the potential of people is part of our created purpose; it's one of the ways we release the kingdom.

At Valley Creek, we make leadership development a part of everything we do. **We are not developing people to accomplish our purposes in ministry, we are developing people to accomplish God's purposes in the world.** But you and I are not enough – we need the whole body of Christ (*John 4:35*).

You will treat others the way you see them. If you see someone as special or of high value, you will treat them with respect and care. We believe there is a leader inside everyone created in the image and likeness of God. We will never stop believing in the redemptive potential of humanity (*Genesis 1:26-28*). Therefore, we don't celebrate the gift in us; we celebrate the reproduction of the gift in others (*2 Timothy 2:2*).

We don't celebrate the gift in us; we celebrate the reproduction of the gift in others.

How do we go about intentionally investing in the potential of those around us? How do we encourage their growth and cultivate their calling?

Jesus provides an excellent example with His three-year investment in the 12 disciples. He modeled how to minister, He experienced the ministry with them, and then He taught them how to do what He did. Jesus didn't use people to accomplish the task; **Jesus accomplished the task while developing people.**

Jesus fulfilled the law, endured the cross, and completed the work His Father had given Him, all while developing leaders (*John 17:4*). With Jesus' example as our guide, let's walk through how we can identify, invite, and invest in the potential of people around us.

Identify:

Jesus saw the kingdom potential in each future disciple (*Matthew 4:18-20*). We don't have to look far to find talent and potential just waiting for investment. Consider those in closest proximity to you; maybe just a few steps behind you in life or in leadership. Use these questions to identify those you are assigned to develop:

- Who has God placed under my authority?
- Who has God placed in my sphere of influence in an unusual way?
- Who has asked me to share wisdom or experience? Who has seemed eager to learn and grow?

Invite:

Jesus invited these future leaders to go deeper with Him (*Mark 3:13-15*). Kingdom leaders don't leave development to chance; kingdom leaders are intentional. When a leader was established in the Bible, the Lord would speak their potential over them (*Joshua 1:1-6*). We are responsible for doing the same for those around us. Our words have the power to breathe life into others (*Proverbs 18:21, Ephesians 4:29*).

By extending an invitation, you are acknowledging their potential and expressing your commitment to their growth. Pray for them to be open to your invitation. People will rise to the level of our expectations. What next step do you need to take to invite them to journey with you?

Invest:

Jesus lived and led with disciples alongside Him at every step (*Luke 6:40*). Jesus taught, corrected, and equipped the twelve (*John 13:12-16*). And finally, Jesus launched the disciples into their ministry assignments (*John 20:21*). Just like any relationship, investing in a leader takes time. Moses prepared Joshua for decades for his eventual leadership role leading the Israelites (*Deuteronomy 34:9*). Moses took Joshua with him to meet with God (*Exodus 24:12-13, Exodus 33:11*) and gave Joshua a priority assignment as one of the 12 spies to report on the land (*Numbers 13:8, 16*). Finally, Moses paved the way for him with the Israelites as their next leader (*Numbers 27:18-23*).

Consider inviting them to join you in the middle of the messiness of your life and leadership. Encourage them with your words and your presence. Speak truth in love about areas of their life that need correction. But most of all, show them Jesus.

When it comes to the practical transfer of skills, consider the following model:

- **I do. You watch. We talk.**
- **I do. You help. We talk.**
- **You do. I help. We talk.**
- **You do. I watch. We talk.**
- **You do. Someone else watches.**

We have the opportunity to be key characters in another person's leadership story! Kingdom leaders recognize developing others is a critical responsibility and a beautiful privilege.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- **Develop others. Kingdom leaders intentionally invest in the potential of people.**
- **Jesus accomplished the task while developing people.**
- **We don't celebrate the gift in us; we celebrate the reproduction of the gift in others.**
- **People will rise to the level of our expectations.**

QUESTIONS FOR MY ASSESSMENT & ACTION

Which of the following next steps do I need to take to develop others?

- Assume the best of others.
- Encourage others in their efforts.
- Celebrate the growth and success of others.
- Mentor new peers by teaching tasks.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

[OWNERSHIP]

Kingdom Practice #4: Make it happen.

Kingdom leaders embrace both authority and responsibility for relationships and results.

Imagine you just purchased a new car. You signed the papers, drove the car home, and parked it in your garage. Now imagine asking your friends for permission every time you want to drive your new car somewhere. Or waiting for your neighbor to take your car for an oil change every 3,000 miles. Or calling your mentor to come over and clean out the backseat. These scenarios would be crazy, right?! Car *ownership* implies you have the full *authority* to drive the car and the full *responsibility* of taking care of it, too.

As kingdom leaders, we must **repent** and change our way of thinking about our leadership authority (*Matthew 4:17*). God wants us to embrace, or own, our identity as kingdom leaders and the authority and responsibilities that go with it. We can make it happen because Jesus made it happen.

Let's take a look at why we know this to be true from Scripture:

- **The same Spirit that was in Jesus is in you.**

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 14:26

- **Because of Jesus, you are anointed to do the unexpected wherever you go.**

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight

for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Luke 4:18-19

- **Because of the Spirit, we are empowered like Jesus.**

This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus.

1 John 4:17

- **Jesus Himself has commissioned you.**

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

John 20:21

Kingdom leaders are Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, Life-giving leaders. Our eyes are locked on the One we follow, so we go where He leads. We are filled with the same Holy Spirit, so we move together in relationship, not in spite of them. And because of Jesus, the fruit of our efforts brings life to those we lead.

God has given you the authority to lead on His behalf.

Making it happen also means we are mindful for both relationships AND results. We don't steamroll over people to meet the deadline or make the sale. Kingdom leaders serve and sacrifice for the good of others (*Mark 8:34-35*). Remember how we said Jesus accomplished the task *while also* developing people? **As kingdom leaders, how we treat others as we lead is a direct reflection on our King.**

At Valley Creek, we make the following four commitments to every person serving on a ministry team:

1. You will be **led with clarity**. We will communicate a clear vision for the church, the ministry, and the role and provide an excellent leader for every team.
2. You will be **invited into community**. We are a family on mission, therefore, no one serves alone.
3. You will be **equipped consistently**. We will invest in you to become who you were created to be.
4. You will be **empowered to serve creatively**. We believe in the redemptive potential of every person so we will invite you to share ideas, solve problems, and lead.

Leaders restore order when they remove the chaos and commit to clarity. These four commitments don't apply just to Valley Creek or a church context. Every leader can make this kind of pledge to the people they lead.

Caring for our relationships doesn't mean ignoring what we've committed to get done. We honor God when we are faithful with the tasks and talents He has entrusted to us (*Matthew 25:14-30*). *Colossians 3:23-24* instructs us, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Nehemiah's example

The Old Testament book of Nehemiah gives us a great example of this kingdom leadership principle. Nehemiah's heart was wrecked when he heard the news about the brokenness of the people of Israel and the destruction of their city. God had given Nehemiah a vision to rebuild the physical wall surrounding the city of Jerusalem. Throughout his story, we see the steps Nehemiah took that we can use to make it happen today.

- **Seek God and make the tough decisions.**

Nehemiah 1

Nehemiah's heart was deeply grieved for God's people. For several days, he allowed his broken heart to drive him to prayer and fasting. This time with God led to his decision to approach the King about a big request.

After we Ask and Listen, kingdom leaders Respond with obedience. What has captivated our hearts will determine the work of our hands. Nothing can happen before we decide our first step and choose to take it.

- **Prepare the strategy and proceed with excellence for quality results.**

Nehemiah 2

Nehemiah visited the site and assessed reality. From there, he made a plan with the vision in mind. He went to his earthly authority and requested the time, people, and resources he needed to get the job done well.

An action plan serves as a map to show us how to get from where we are to where we want to be. Without following through on the plan, we only have good intentions that never get us anywhere productive. A thoughtful strategy combined with follow-through allows us to be intentional with accountability to milestones, investment of people's strengths, and allocation of resources.

- **Persevere through the difficult days and address the issues.**

Nehemiah 4, 6

On multiple occasions, Nehemiah's enemies tried to thwart the rebuilding efforts. The Scriptures even note that Nehemiah and his team were building with a tool in one hand and a sword in the other! Nehemiah didn't ignore his enemies' plots but adapted his approach in order to keep the momentum going.

Jesus said we would experience trouble in this world (*John 16:33*). The evil one has come to steal, kill, and destroy anything reflective of the Son of God (*John 10:10*). Kingdom leaders will have hard days. We will try things and fail. (Miserably.) Distractions, disease, and delays will try to thwart our efforts. Our teams need us to

address the issues and adjust accordingly. Kingdom leaders persevere by staying focused on the long term vision and the work at hand (*Nehemiah 6:3*).

- **Celebrate the win and share the praise.**

Nehemiah 12:27-43

When his massive construction project was complete, Nehemiah didn't just pack up and head home. He and the Israelites hosted an elaborate praise party! They celebrated, worshipped, and recommitted themselves to their God.

If we tie up a project and just move on to the next one, we miss out on marking the moment. By celebrating what God accomplished through our efforts, we remind ourselves of all the tremendous and tiny ways His power broke through. Celebrating our accomplishments also allows us to express our gratitude to our team members. Our relationships are strengthened and their confidence is built when we speak specific words of praise for their contribution to a job well done.

Why we can make it happen:

While working hard and making it happen, our focus is not stressful striving to produce results. Our focus is always on Jesus and abiding in Him—the True Vine. The supernatural result of taking next steps with Him is producing fruit that satisfies and sustains (*John 15:1-6*).

Jesus-focused leaders focus on what Jesus has done for us, not on what we have to do for Him. Our identity determines our purpose. Who we think we are, determines what we do and how we live. We receive from Jesus and then release it to those we lead (*Luke 9:1-3*).

We can make it happen in our leadership because Jesus made it happen in our lives. *1 Thessalonians 5:24* says it this way, "The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do it."

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- **Make it happen. Kingdom leaders embrace authority and responsibility for relationships and results.**
- **God has given you the authority to lead on His behalf.**
- **We can make it happen in our leadership because Jesus made it happen in our lives.**

QUESTIONS FOR MY ASSESSMENT & ACTION

In my life and leadership, do I tend to focus more on relationships or results? Why is this?

Where in my life do I need to receive from Jesus and release to those I lead?

Which of the following next steps do I need to take in order to make it happen?

- Follow through on assigned tasks, on time, with excellence.
- Pray through resistance when projects have problems.
- Apologize when something goes wrong and make it right.



SESSION FOUR

SESSION FOUR NOTES

Kingdom Leader Practice #5: Take next steps.

Kingdom leaders pursue growth in every aspect of their lives.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

In this first section, notice the leadership activities without love and underline the results they would have.

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Now for the second section of this passage, circle the qualities of a leader who leads with love.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails...

ROOTED IN JESUS

FLOURISH IN LIFE



Engage the Scriptures

Talk with God

Build Godly Relationships

Meet the Needs You See

Invest Your Time

TAKE NEXT STEPS [MOMENTUM]

Kingdom Leader Practice #5: Take next steps.

Kingdom leaders pursue growth in every aspect of their lives.

What if next month you didn't have to bite your tongue to control your reaction to someone but could naturally respond with grace? What if six months from now you didn't avoid taking the stairs when the elevator is full, but you chose the stairwell because you felt energized when you reached the top? What if next year you weren't stressed by the situations that cause you significant stress right now?

What if we told you all these realities and more were completely possible and within your reach?

This is what growth looks like! With the Holy Spirit leading and empowering us, God does transforming work in our lives. When we gain new tools and practice applying them, they change the way we live and lead. When we **repent** and change our way of thinking, our improved perspective gives way to wise decisions (*Matthew 4:17*). When we upgrade our abilities, we produce better results.

The success of a kingdom leader is not determined by the talents of their hands but the health of their hearts.

Modeling a lifestyle of next steps is one of the greatest ways we inspire others, because we have a life worth learning from (*Hebrews 13:7*). Leaders are not perfect. Through reflection, leaders learn from their mistakes and apply these learnings to their next assignment.

We can never outgrow the basics (*Matthew 6:33*)! Cultivating growth means we are continuing to cycle through the three circles of receiving His grace, experiencing His presence, and releasing His kingdom; all the while going deeper into the Father's Heart.

Let's break down a bit further what it means to pursue growth in every aspect of our lives.

Pursue growth

Kingdom leaders never "arrive." There will always be a next step to take and more people to lead. Leaders live beyond the status quo (*Revelation 3:16*). We maximize momentum when we continue to follow Jesus and take next steps with Him (*Luke 2:52, 1 John 2:6*). The best thing we bring to our leadership is not our experience or expertise but our own journey with Jesus; the transforming work He is about in our lives.

We are responsible for our own health and growth—no one can take a next step for us.

Big things start small and grow. In *1 Samuel 17:34-36* we see David's journey as a mighty warrior from his humble beginnings as a shepherd, to killing a lion, then a bear, to slaying the giant Goliath, then later defending Israel by destroying countless enemies on the battlefield. As David grew older, he physically grew in size, but he also worked to grow in strength, skill, and spiritual stamina, which prepared him for the future opportunities God would bring his way.

In every aspect of our lives

We must be intentional to develop both our character *and* our competency; to nurture the strength of our souls *and* our skills.

Consider the following passage from *1 Corinthians 13:1-8*. We normally associate this passage with romantic love and weddings, but what if this section was Paul continuing his teaching to leaders like us?

Notice the leadership activities without love and the results they would have.

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

If we grow in our persuasive speaking skills without growing in our love for God and others, we will manipulate instead of inspire. If we grow in our ability to plan and see a preferred future without growing in our love for God and others, we will build our own kingdom instead of building His kingdom. It's worth repeating: **We must be intentional to develop both our character *and* our competency; to nurture the strength of our souls *and* our skills.**

Now for the second section of this passage, notice the qualities of a leader who leads with love.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails...

Write these “lovely” leadership qualities in your own words here:

Kingdom leaders lead with faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). In John 15:12, Jesus says, “This is my commandment: that you love one another just as I have loved you.” Jesus did not command us to lead; He commanded us to love. This is how we lead: we lead with love.

We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). Until we receive His love for us, we have no love to give. Until you believe you are loved like Jesus is, you won’t have the freedom to be sent like Jesus was. Loving leadership is a result of fanning into flame our passion for Him and the development of the gifts He has given us (2 Timothy 1:6).

ROOTED IN JESUS

FLOURISH IN LIFE



We pursue health and growth in all areas of our lives because all areas of our lives affect our leadership.

Leadership is not about what you're doing, but who you are becoming. The way we pursue growth is by getting rooted in Jesus. As a leader, our good Father is inviting you to uproot from things in this world, and to get rooted in Jesus so that you can flourish in life and leadership. There are five different roots, or pathways of connection, to build a thriving, abiding relationship with Jesus.

Engage the Scriptures

The first way to get rooted in Jesus as a leader is to engage the Scriptures. We are not meant to work on the Scriptures, but the Scriptures are meant to work on us (Psalm 1:1-3, 119:105). As leaders, we often ask for worldly counsel instead of seeking out heavenly wisdom found in God's word (Proverbs 2:6, Hebrews 13:7, James 1:5). Set aside consistent time to read, reflect, and memorize

Talk with God

Followers talk to God about stuff; leaders talk to God about people (James 5:16). As kingdom leaders, we take the needs of the people on our teams to our good Father (Philippians 4:6-7). We also ask Him for His perspective – to help us see them as He does: image bearers with kingdom releasing potential. When you pray for the people you lead, you begin to carry them around in your heart.

Build Godly Relationships

Kingdom leaders are paving the way for others: we're pioneers pushing back the kingdom of darkness. But leadership can be lonely. If we're not careful, when protecting ourselves from critics we can end up isolating ourselves from godly relationships. We are in desperate need of Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, Life-giving friendships. Kingdom leaders develop intentional relationships with those who will encourage, challenge, and pray for us in the middle of it all (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Meet the Needs You See

When we serve, it reveals God to a broken world and connects our heart to His. We are to use all our vast resources in the service of God and man (Genesis 1:28). This includes serving those we lead. Serving keeps us humble and is the pathway to authority (1 Peter 5:7). Whether it's making a connection to help someone advance in their career, extending an invitation to lunch to listen to their heart, or helping a teammate move, kingdom leaders choose to put on the servant's towel and serve those closest to us (Philippians 2:4-8).

Invest Your Time

Leaders often put tremendous value on extreme efficiency, going further faster, and pushing past limits. However, in an effort to increase productivity we can decrease our effectiveness. In an era when the world worships time and is asking us to speed up, the kingdom of God values our souls and is asking us to slow down (Psalm 46:10). We create space to shepherd the hearts of those we lead and to develop them into their potential. We also prioritize pulling away from the team for time with God. Fruit can't grow on a tree that is only watered and fed once a week. Our souls hunger and thirst for time with the One who has everything we need to flourish in life (John 6:35).

When our roots grow deep, we produce spiritual fruit, fruit that lasts (Galatians 5:22-23). Our fruit feeds and sustains those we lead and becomes the leadership legacy that paves the way for those behind us.

Recommended Resource

Rooted In Jesus Message Series

To learn more practical ways you can pursue growth and flourish in life, listen to or watch the messages from the Rooted In Jesus series. valleycreek.org/media

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

- **Take next steps. Kingdom leaders pursue growth in every aspect of their lives.**
- **We are responsible for our own health and growth—no one can take a next step for us.**
- **We must be intentional to develop our character and our competency; to nurture the strength of our souls and our skills.**

QUESTIONS FOR MY ASSESSMENT & ACTION

Which root do I need to focus on first?

Which of the following next steps do I need to take to pursue growth?

- Maintain a healthy rhythm of work and rest.
- Steward personal gifts, talents, and abilities.
- Seek feedback from others on character development.
- Pursue a mentor.

PLANNING YOUR NEXT STEPS

Maybe you're asking yourself, "Where do I even begin?" Try this: start with what you have, right where you are.

In *Matthew 25*, Jesus shared a poignant parable that speaks to right where you are. Jesus tells the story of a wealthy man who leaves town and entrusts his servants with different amounts of money to manage while he is gone. (*Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27*).

The master's responses to the servants were wildly different. To the one who had twice as much money to return, the master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (*Matthew 25:21*) And to the servant who had only the original amount of money that was entrusted to him, the master responded by calling him a "wicked, lazy servant." (*Matthew 25:26*) Ouch.

Just like the servants in this parable, whatever gifts or talents we choose to bury or ignore we will lose. It doesn't matter how much we have, it matters what we do with it. When we are faithful with what we have been given, God will entrust us with more. When we lead well where we are, God will expand our influence.

As God's beloved sons and daughters, we have been given spiritual gifts, skills and talents, physical and mental abilities, and financial resources to manage on His behalf. But even more important than all of these combined, God has entrusted us with His most precious treasure of all: *His sons and daughters to love and lead.*

There's a joy you'll never know if you don't live out your kingdom leadership potential (*Luke 10:17*). Your leadership can be life-giving to those around you. Your leadership can have powerful impact on the kingdom of God and on the world today. Your response to this kingdom calling can invoke this response from your King, "Well done, good and faithful leader!"

Your next steps

You have the ability to follow the lead of our King and build His kingdom. But it's not enough for Valley Creek to believe this for you. You have to believe this truth for yourself.

You have some important decisions to make:

- Will you choose to embrace your calling as a kingdom leader?
- Will you choose to bring heaven to earth today?
- Will you choose to take a next step on your leadership journey?

You also have some important next steps to take. With each step, we follow the cloud (*Exodus 13:21*). But the first step is always the hardest step to take! The law of physics tells us that things in motion stay in motion, and things at rest stay at rest. As we take next steps, momentum builds, our vision is expanded, and the process of the kingdom practices begins again.

Remember, we are right here with you: praying, encouraging, and cheering for you every next step of the way. We can't wait to see how God works through YOU to release His kingdom and bring heaven to earth today.

Use the following pages to help you capture your key takeaways and plan your next steps.

My biggest “AHA!” moments from this LeaderStep experience were:

My lingering questions about being a kingdom leader are:

The kingdom leader practice I need to focus on is:

- 1. See the Vision**
- 2. Go First**
- 3. Develop Others**
- 4. Make It Happen**
- 5. Take Next Steps**

My next step will be:

By this time frame:

Other thoughts and reflections:

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Books:

The following are a few of our favorite leadership reads:

- *Developing the Leaders Around You*
by John Maxwell
- *Follow The Cloud: Hearing God's Voice One Next Step At A Time*
by John Stickl
- *The Heart of Leadership: Becoming a Leader People Want to Follow*
by Mark Miller
- *The Power that Changes the World: Creating Eternal Impact in the Here and Now*
by Bill Johnson and Jack Hayford
- *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry*
by Ruth Haley Barton

