

Becoming the Kind of Person God Can Use to Launch Movements—Part 2

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The Apostle Paul exhorted the Galatian church to walk in freedom. The young church had been infiltrated by Judaizers who wanted everyone to be circumcised. In Galatians 5:4, Paul writes, “You who are trying to be justified by the law have been *alienated from Christ*; you have fallen away from grace.”

As humans, we like to be doers. Church-planters and Disciple Making Movement practitioners want to do things right. We are always learning, searching, reading and talking to people about what is the most effective strategy or fruitful practice we can use to bring the maximum number of people into the kingdom as quickly as possible.

There is nothing wrong with this. In many ways, it is good. The millions of unreached peoples will never become faithful Jesus followers without hard work, realignment to New Testament methods and the embracing strategies for multiplication. We must do, and do a lot.

In the midst of this, it's easy though to lose sight of other things just as vital, like the importance of being the kind of people who reflect Christ to a hurting world. We sometimes focus so much on doing that we fall away from grace and are “alienated from Christ.” No longer do we resemble Him—His goodness, His kindness, His compassion, or fervor for His Father's will. It is possible to do everything right as far as a strategy but fall short in our personal transformation. God rarely entrusts His greater fruit to those who ignore the importance of being as well as doing. It is our Christlikeness that attracts unbelievers to consider our message. Our character, as we imitate Christ, is the foundation a movement is built on.

In Part 1, (see *Mission Frontiers* Jan–Feb 2021) I wrote about six characteristics of the kind of person God can use greatly. If you missed this first part, please take the time to read it.

As you read these, take time to ponder. Discuss the questions with your team or spouse. Journal about them. Allow the Holy Spirit to stir within you a fresh longing to grow in these areas.

The first six characteristics:

- 1) They have an ever-growing relationship with God and an extraordinary prayer life.
- 2) They are bold and faithful in witness.
- 3) They are willing to face persecution from enemies.
- 4) They are willing to be misunderstood by friends.
- 5) They innovate, evaluate and change.
- 6) They are willing to stop doing unfruitful activities and focus on a few high impact things.

This list is not exhaustive. Here in Part 2, we will consider six additional characteristics of those God entrusts with His great work of releasing movements. As you read these, take time to ponder. Discuss the questions with your team or spouse. Journal about them. Allow the Holy Spirit to stir within you a fresh longing to grow in these areas.

7 They are filled with God's Spirit and Word.

Because these leaders have extraordinary prayer lives (see #1, Part 1), they drink deeply of God each day and throughout the day. Abiding in Him has become a way of life. Regular meditation on Scripture is a habit that brings a fullness of the Word deep within. This naturally overflows from their hearts as well as their lips as they disciple, train and share the good news.

In tune with the Spirit of God and full of His presence, they follow God's leading in both big and small decisions. Heightened sensitivity to what He is doing is apparent. They have their "spiritual antennas" up and are sensing, listening and aware of God's work around them. Responding to His nudges, they obey and flow with God. The power of God's Spirit works through them. Signs, wonders, and miracles are the natural result of a life lived in deep dependence upon the Holy Spirit.



8 They persevere through times of suffering, loss and spiritual deserts.

Perseverance in hardship is a common characteristic of movement leaders. This can be observed in the life of Jesus, Paul and the apostles, as well as the early church fathers. An imbalanced theology says if we love and follow God our lives will be easy. This false teaching has crept into the church in many parts of the world.

Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days. His close friend and cousin, John the Baptist, was murdered unjustly. The Lord suffered and died.

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Paul was beaten, stoned and imprisoned. Peter was crucified upside-down. Hardship is part of the pathway toward the release of greater kingdom fruit.

The movement leaders God uses greatly will experience suffering. Spouses or children may fall sick or even die. Grief is not a stranger to these leaders. Many experience seasons of spiritual dryness, or what might be called a *Dark Night of the Soul*. In all these challenges, they refuse to quit on God or His calling for their lives. The vision the Father has placed within them compels them to continue. They share the gospel with one more person, even when no one seems to listen. They choose to once again trust and develop leaders under them, even when betrayed by those they mentored in the past. These leaders continue, despite deep personal pain.

In Matthew 14, John the Baptist was beheaded. Verse 13 says that when Jesus heard this He withdrew, but the crowds followed him. He had compassion on them and healed their sick, then fed the five thousand. Despite a great personal loss, He continued in the ministry God had given Him, loving and serving the multitudes.

9 They have a strong faith in the God of the impossible

Movement leaders must have unshakable confidence in God's power to do what they cannot. They have a lowly opinion of themselves, but an incredibly strong belief that God can and will come through to fulfill His promise.

These leaders have tested and seen Him be the one who works miracles.

Like David, they started by taking on smaller challenges and bears. This gives them faith to believe God can slay giants. They are willing to ask God for great things because they experientially know their God to be a God of great power and might.

Their trust is in God and His Word, not in what they see or in past experiences. As a result, they regularly take risks of faith to boldly ask God for the miraculous.

10 They are continually releasing power and responsibility to others.

These leaders are not hungry to be on stage in front of adoring crowds. Instead, they embrace the joy of developing others. As a result, God places key Timothy's in their lives to encourage and train.

They believe in "rough diamonds" and are willing to work with people, shaping their ministry philosophy, modeling, praying and investing in them until they become the kind of people God uses greatly. Their relationships with those they coach or mentor go deep, far beyond a weekly meeting. Sharing life, they stand by them, fight for them. They are more than happy to stand in the background while those they've trained take the front.

This willingness to stay in the shadow and develop others is key to seeing a movement grow. These leaders don't care about becoming a big name or personality. Instead, they want only to see every disciple grow and develop in their gifts and strengths to be all God intends them to be as disciple-makers and leaders in their realm of influence. This means sacrificing personal fame and gain to invest in others and see them succeed.

11 They are kingdom, not organizationally minded.

Similarly, they are not consumed with building their denomination, organization or team into a successful entity. They generously share what God has taught them with others. Even with those outside their network. This mindset causes them to collaborate and partner with other DMM practitioners often.

Wanting to see your denomination or organization become known and be respected is a powerful human tendency. We all want to be attached to something that experiences success.

The kind of movement leaders and catalysts God uses have died to this fleshly desire and continue to die daily. They champion and value the fruitfulness of others, above their group. Philippians 2:3 says "consider others as more important than ourselves." These leaders practice this in their lives and ministry plans. Because of this kingdom mindset, God adds to them freely.

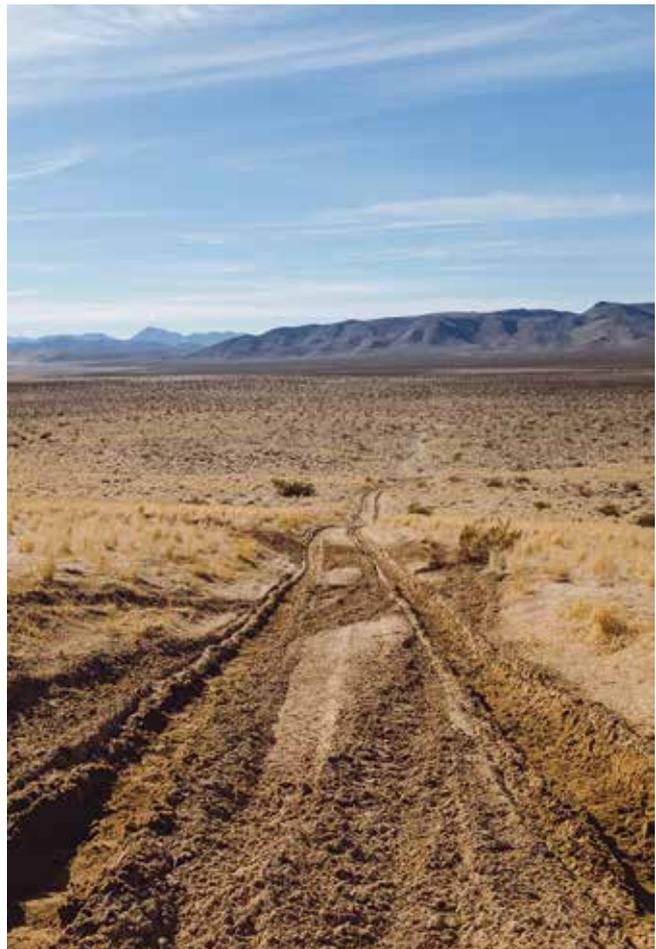
12 They walk in an ever-growing humility.

Like Paul, movement leaders God uses must be aware of their weaknesses. They count their accomplishments as immaterial. (2 Cor. 11:30) Glory goes to God when things go right, yet they take responsibility for their own mistakes.

Humility is the final characteristic in my list because it is one of the most important. It is also one that takes time to develop. Humility doesn't grow in us quickly. It's rarely found in the young who have not yet walked through great pain, failure or hardship.

Pride and insecurity are common to all. Two sides of the same coin and if you are a living, breathing human, you will battle these. When we fail, we wonder if we are worthy to be used by God. We swing toward insecurity. In times of success, we tend to think we are better than others, and pride rears its ugly head.

Humility is shaped within through the times when we are hurled to our knees by life. We desperately cry out to God for help and wisdom. At the end of ourselves, we know that unless God intervenes we are in deep trouble. His life is being formed within us.



Giants, Mountains, and Immovable Obstacles

Our faith in God's mighty power and our love for the lost leads us to ask Him for great fruit. As we pursue our God-sized dreams for many more movements we will encounter giants, mountains and seemingly immovable obstacles. These challenges grow us in humility, and many of the other characteristics I've mentioned in this two-part series.

Don't despise the giants. Don't despair when climbing a great mountain, far bigger than yourself. The immovable obstacles are training you. They are shaping your character into the kind of person God can use to bring about His incredible kingdom purposes.

Success Will Tempt You, But God Will Help You

Great fruitfulness will tempt you to take glory for yourself. You suddenly face the opportunity to build your name or kingdom. You can raise money, make a name for yourself, have material blessings or build a grand building. Beware. The choices you make at the height of fruitfulness will determine whether the movement grows far beyond you, or stops in its tracks.

God has plans for your future and mine far beyond what we can imagine. His work on earth is not yet complete. Millions wait to hear. Will we become the kind of people He can use greatly? 

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