



# GROWING LEADERS

- **Introductory Video**
- **Leaders' Guide**
- **Handouts 1-6**
- **PowerPoint**
- **Activity 1**

**4**

**DEVELOPING  
CHARACTER**

# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

‘Be more concerned with your character than your reputation. Your character is what you really are while your reputation is merely what others think you are.’

JOHN WOODEN

## Session Overview

- Aim (10 mins).
- Way in (25 mins).
- Bible, marks of Christ-like character (25 mins).
- Refreshments (10 mins).
- Activity, how do we develop Christ-like character? (35 mins).
- Worship (13 mins).
- And finally (2 mins).

## Session Aims

- To define and describe character.
- To identify why godly character is so important in leadership.
- To explore ways of growing to be like Christ.

## Bible Base

2 Peter 1:1-11. This passage reminds us of the balance between what God has done for us and what we do in response. It is worth a slow ponder, and even perhaps taking the time to learn some or all of it by heart. If you'd like further reflection on the passage see Growing Leaders pages 152-154.

## Background

Many people exhibit leadership abilities, but fewer leaders exhibit Christ-like character. Often things go wrong in leadership because of character flaws. The New Testament constantly stresses character over ability (Titus 1:6-9). In this session we shall focus on character as the third foundational element of Christian leadership. The great news is that this is God's work, and he is far more able to bring about Christ-likeness than we are. He won't give up on us.

The flow of the session is as follows:

- What is character? How does it differ from personality?
- How can we recognise Christ-like character?
- How do we develop Christ-like character?

This topic may raise big issues for some participants (and for ourselves as leaders of the course). Some may be unaware of certain aspects of their character, others may be very conscious of the reality of character flaws. Some may be wondering if change is possible, others may not even be aware that change is necessary. We'll need to be pastorally sensitive and biblically gracious in our approach to the material, and it may be a good idea to alert the mentors to the possible repercussions of this session.

By now some people on the course may be getting a little frustrated that they haven't learnt a lot about leadership itself. Remind people that Growing Leaders Part 1 is focused on 'followership' as the fundamental prerequisite of leadership. This session focuses on character issues. Much of the material is about discipleship. Yet the leader's character is vital for the reasons explored on page 5 of these notes. If you sense any of the participants are particularly frustrated, you may like to have a personal conversation with them.

### DEFINITIONS

Issues of character are often mentioned in leadership books and journals, but it isn't always clear what is meant by these things. Because of this we have tried to define each term as it comes. We don't want to claim that our definitions are 'right' or 'perfect'. We simply want to offer them as a way of agreeing the terms we use on Growing Leaders.

# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

## COPYRIGHT ISSUES

During this session we are suggesting that you use various video clips. Please ensure that you have appropriate copyright permission for whatever you choose to use. For further information on copyright, including details of where to get copyright licences, please see the introductory guide to the course.

## ? Your Own Preparation

- **Pray** Change is the work of the Spirit, so pray for people to be open to the change that Christ wants to bring in their lives.
- **Meditate** Take time to reflect on Galatians 5:20, the fruit of the Spirit, and personally engage with what God may want to change in you. As leaders of the course we need to model our willingness to change and become more like Christ.
- **Prepare** The temptation at this stage of Growing Leaders Part 1 will be to skimp on the preparation. Try to give 'quality time' to working out the best way of leading this session with your group. Remember the material is only a guideline. Change it to suit where necessary. You may like to read chapters 6 to 8 of Growing Leaders. As preparation for the material on spiritual disciplines, provide a selection of published Bible reading notes to show participants.

'It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy person is an awesome weapon in the hands of God.'

ROBERT MURRAY MCCHEYNE

## Materials

- Refreshments.
- DVD of Troy or script of The Office.
- TV and DVD player.
- A1 flipchart paper.
- Marker pens.
- Blu-Tack.
- Post-it notes.

## HANDOUTS

- Handout 1 Character matters.
- Handout 2 Marks of Christ-like character.
- Handout 3 Developing character.
- Handout 4 Case studies.
- Handout 5 2 Peter 1:1-11.
- Handout 6 Feedback form.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

- Introductory video.
- Activity 1 Developing character wheels from the template.
- Session 4 PowerPoint.



# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

## Outline



**Aim**  
0-10 MINS

Slide 1

### ARRIVAL

Once again ensure the venue is attractive and appropriate for the session. You may well be running this session in December, so perhaps some seasonal decoration and refreshments? As this is potentially quite a 'heavy' session, you could find a creative way to encourage each participant as they arrive. For example: in preparation for the evening, invite someone they lead (or who leads them) to write a card or letter of thanks identifying one or two specific characteristics they appreciate about the individual. Place them in envelopes and put them on the chairs with the person's favourite choccy.

### INTRODUCTION

Slide 2

Welcome people and thank them for coming. Remind them of what you've covered so far on Part 1 of Growing Leaders. Acknowledge again that much of Part 1 concentrates on issues of discipleship and how it affects leadership.

Slide 3

Review the last session, clarifying call. Give a few moments for any comments or questions. You may like to invite people to call out a one-word summary of what they learned from the session on calling.

Slides 4-6

Introduce this session, developing character, explaining its aims and format. Pray.



**Way In**  
10-35 MINS

Slide 7

### OPTION 1: ACT OUT 'THE OFFICE' (10 MINS)

Unless you can afford the BBC copyright fee for watching The Office (currently £250/minute for charities – call them direct on 0208 483 2861), get hold of a copy of the scripts (ISBN 0 563 48741 0) and find a section where the character David Brent is extolling his skill as a leader or manager. Find a few people from the group who would be willing to read out the parts. Get people into groups to consider:

- What did David Brent's actions reveal about his character?
- List some of the positive character qualities you like to see in leaders.

Slide 8

### OPTION 2: TROY (10 MINS)

In the film Troy, there is a moving scene where King Priam goes to Achilles to ask for the body of his son Hector so he can give him a proper burial (DVD Scene 35, 1:59). Watch the scene and then get people into groups to discuss the following questions:

- What did the actions of the two men reveal about their character?
- List some of the positive character qualities you like to see in leaders.

Flipchart  
paper and  
marker pens

### OPTION 3: CHARACTERISTICS (10 MINS)

Get people into groups of four, and give them flipchart paper and pens. Invite them to draw a person and then identify qualities they would look for in a leader according to the parts of the body. For example, around the heart they might write compassion, love; around the head, thoughtfulness.

Handout 1

### FEEDBACK ON WHY CHARACTER MATTERS

At the end of whichever exercise you choose, take some feedback on why godly character is so important for leaders. Perhaps create a list on a flipchart. Be



# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

## Outline

sure to draw the following out of the discussion:

- Leaders are called to a holy life (1 Peter 1:15-16).
- The damage when leaders don't act in a godly way ripples far beyond those immediately involved. It affects the wider community of those they lead, as well as people's perceptions of the Church and its gospel.
- Without godly character the leader's life undermines their message.
- In Christian leadership character determines how far people are willing to follow. A competent leader may be gifted, but they won't be trusted without godly character.
- People will model themselves on us. Scary, but true.

Perhaps illustrate this by telling a story from your own experience of when a character issue made a difference (preferably a story of when you got it wrong).

### DEFINITIONS

Define what we mean when we talk about character. Part of the difficulty here is that the literature on this subject (both professional and popular) is diverse. Explain that for the sake of this session we shall define them as follows: personality and character are two sides of the same coin. Personality is given, character is formed.

Slide 9

- **Personality** This is the basic building block of who we are, and is focused around preferences. Our personality is 'value neutral'. One type of personality isn't 'better' than another, just different. Each human being has preferences because of the way they are wired up, for example extrovert/introvert, feeling/thinking, sensing/intuition, perceiving/judging (to use Myers-Briggs terminology). These preferences are a combination of nature and nurture. They are generally in place by the time we are an adult. For example, if you are an extrovert, it is unlikely this will change much through life. Our personality can be polished like a pearl, but not changed very much. Therefore the key is growing self-awareness (maturity) which helps us understand our preferences better and how they affect others.
- **Character** We define this as 'the aggregate of the distinctive qualities characteristic of an individual'. Character contains a value judgement; you can be a person of good or bad character. As Christians we believe God wants to grow us in Christ-like character, in qualities such as godliness, integrity, faithfulness, humility, servant-heartedness. These are not preferences or optional extras, but an essential part of following Christ. There is always the danger that our ministry exceeds our character. With character we need to be humble about our strengths and working on the gaps, allowing Christ to transform us.

*(Talent and skills and knowledge are also included on the PowerPoint slide as it helps to connect these from the previous sessions into this picture.)*

Character reveals itself (a) in the small things, for example how we treat people; in particular those who can't do anything for us, we don't want anything from, or for whom we have no responsibility; (b) when under pressure, for example when we have 'one of those days'; c) when in private, for example what we are really like when there isn't an audience to play to, when we can 'get away with it'. Give some space for questions/discussion for clarification.



# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

## Outline



**Bible**  
35-60 MINS

### THE MARKS OF CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER

Take time to inspire people with the beauty of Jesus' character. You may like to use the story of the silversmith on page 134 of Growing Leaders to introduce this section. There are two options:

Slide 10  
Handout 2

#### OPTION 1: TEACH THE THEMES

Take people through some of the qualities of Jesus' character. You could use the following framework.

Slides 11-12

- Jesus, the man of love, looks for leaders of love (1 John 4:8-12; 1 Corinthians 16:14).
- Jesus, the man of integrity, looks for leaders of integrity (Hebrews 4:14-16; Matthew 19:16-26). Integrity is the quality of being undivided, complete. I am who I am no matter where I am or who I am with. Integrity flows from who we are, and builds consistency. Authenticity is the next layer out, and is dependent on integrity. It is the quality of lack of falseness or imitation, of being fully trustworthy. Authenticity builds trust. Credibility builds on both these. It is the quality of inspiring belief and it builds confidence. It is possible to appear credible, to look the part, say the right things, but if we don't demonstrate authenticity and integrity over time we will lose credibility.

Slide 13

- Jesus, a man who served, looks for leaders with 'servant hearts' (Mark 10:45; John 13:1-17). We've already identified this in session 1 as one of the distinctive aspects of Christian leadership.
- Jesus, a man of compassion, looks for leaders of compassion (John 11:35; Luke 7:11-17; 18:35-43). Compassion is defined as a willingness to 'suffer with' others without a need to 'fix them'.
- Jesus, a man of truth, looks for leaders of truth (Matthew 5:37). In an age of 'spin' people are looking for truth tellers.
- Jesus, a man of faith, looks for leaders of faith (Mark 14:36; 1 Corinthians 4:2). Jesus was faithful to God's will to the end. So must we be. Christian leadership isn't so much about success as about faithfulness to God in all things.
- Jesus, a man of forgiveness, looks for leaders of forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15). We will be hurt as leaders. It is inevitable. If we cannot or will not forgive others who let us down, hurt us, or fight us we will quickly become embittered, cynical, and protective.
- Jesus, a man of humility, looks for humble leaders (Philippians 2:5-11; John 13:1-7). This humility is defined as 'not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less'. It is expressed in a willingness to serve and a willingness to be served.

#### OPTION 2: EXPLORE THE THEMES

Divide into groups of three. Give each group two of the above qualities to explore by looking up the Bible references in the text. Ask them to list the way these qualities are worked out in the character of the leader. After twelve minutes invite them to share their insights with the whole group.

#### PRAYER

You may like to end this section with prayer. In whatever way fits your group, give thanks for Jesus, and the wonderful way he models godly character.



# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

## Outline



**Refresh**  
60-70 MINS

Go on: make them fun, funky and fulsome – whatever that means.



**Activity**  
70-105 MINS

Slide 14  
Handout 3

### DEVELOPING CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER

In this section we want to identify how we grow in Christ-likeness. Introduce the section by explaining whichever of these background points you think is relevant for your group.

- Ultimately this is a work of God in us. It is about 'Christ transformation' not self-reformation.
- Each of us has a public world, which everyone sees, and a private world, which only those closest to us see. We also have a personal world, which only we know about. Developing Christ-like character involves keeping the gap between these worlds as small as possible.
- Character develops in several ways.
  - ⇒ **Intentional development** Costly choices based on values. The groove (habit) deepens as we consistently make these choices over time. This is costly because character is formed in the crucible of breaking through quitting points (those times when we wonder why we don't just give up), dealing with disappointments, facing our dark side (that aspect of our character that readily leads us into sin), fulfilling our personal commitments to growth, and exercising spiritual disciplines.
  - ⇒ **Responses to life** Trials and tribulations (James 1:2-5; Romans 5:1-5) test our faith and lead to endurance, steadfastness, wisdom and insight.
- Character formation is normally slow and often painful, but it follows a path. Discuss the 'growth spiral' using slide 15.

Slide 15

Explain that developing self-awareness is central to growth. As we get to know ourselves better we are more able to see what God wants to change in us. You may like to use the 'Johari window' to help people with this (see PowerPoint and Growing Leaders, pages 129-130).

Slide 16

### OPTION 1: THE CHARACTER WHEEL

Explain that we are going to use a wheel to help us identify practical ways to grow. Here's how the exercise works.

Activity 1

Slide 17

1. Describe the six things on the wheel God frequently uses to grow character. Be clear that God doesn't cause these things, but wants to redeem them to help us become more like Christ.
2. Ask participants to form groups of four. Give each group a spinner and invite them to spin it. When it stops they should discuss the aspect of character written on the segment it's landed on. Encourage them to brainstorm stories and ideas linked to Christ-like development. After five minutes invite them to spin again – and, for the final time, after another five minutes.

### OPTION 2: CASE STUDIES

Handout 4

In groups of four, invite participants to take a case study and discuss how the person described could grow in Christ-like character through the situation. They may have time to consider two or three.

As you end this activity, draw the group back together and give a few minutes for people to share their insights. Remind them that other people are 'key' to this work in our lives. That is why we've linked them with mentors, and also why we encourage them to spend time with other leaders as peers. We all need





# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

## Outline

people who will hold us accountable, encourage and affirm us, provide us with honest feedback: 'Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses' (Proverbs 27:6).



**Worship**  
105-118 MINS

### TIME TO CHANGE

As you come to the end of the session, take time to pray/worship/reflect. There are a variety of options below:

Slide 18

Handout 5a

### OPTION 1: REFLECT ON 2 PETER 1

Invite participants to reflect on the passage on the handout and identify one thing they think God may be calling them to 'make every effort to support their faith with...' Write this quality on the Post-it and then get into pairs, swapping Post-its and praying for one another, for God to do his work in one another's lives. If you prefer not to use 2 Peter, there is an alternative list on handout 5b.

Handout 5b

### OPTION 2: MARKS OF CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER

Invite people to consider the list from earlier in the session and prayerfully choose two or three items that they would like to see God develop in them. Write them on a Post-it and pray as above.

### OPTION 3: ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

You could read one of the reflections on character in the additional material on page 12 of this guide as a way of inviting people to reflect quietly on what you've covered during this session.



**Finally**  
118-120 MINS

Slide 19

Handout 6

Thank people for coming. Give them the feedback form. Encourage them to discuss the issues with their mentors. Inform them about the date and subject matter of the next session. You can also remind them that if they want to explore this topic further they can look at Growing Leaders chapters 6-7.

Pray.





# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

## Before Next Time

### FOR YOU AS LEADERS

Well done. You've reached the end of Part 1 of Growing Leaders. It would be good to meet as leaders and discuss how things have gone, both what has worked well and what could be improved. Identify if there are any individuals you need to follow up, pray together and begin the preparations for Growing Leaders Part 2. If you're feeling inspired you may like to:

- Send each participant a card of thanks for their contribution to the sessions so far, identifying specific things you're grateful they have brought to the course.
- Give them a small gift at Christmas as a reminder of the material in Part 1.
- Pray that they may be renewed in their relationship with Christ over the Christmas season.

### IN PREPARATION FOR SESSION 5

As leaders of the course there are several things you will need to do before session 5.

- Send the mentors the next mentor bulletin related to this session.
- As you've come to the end of Part 1 it would be a good time to meet up with the mentors and find out how things are going. Be sure to encourage them and work with them on any difficulties they have encountered.
- Session 5 is the second 24-hour away session. Be sure you've got all the practical arrangements sorted.
- We suggest some possible video clips on page 14 of the leaders' guide. You will need to source these.
- On page 31 we suggest you might like to invite in a surprise guest as part of the final section of the day. If you're going to do this you will need to identify an appropriate person and brief them well for their role.
- Pray and prepare for session 5. Remember it will take longer than a normal session as there are four sections to the time away. Don't forget to watch the video introducing the session.

## Additional Material

### Useful Quotations

'It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy person is an awesome weapon in the hands of God.'

Robert Murray McCheyne

'Everybody thinks of changing humanity. Nobody thinks of changing themselves.'

Leo Tolstoy

'Character is life lived in relationship with God; it is about being the person God intends you to be for the sake of the people whom God brings across your path. People of character become leaders whether they hold a position of leadership or not.'

Walter Wright

'Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.'

Helen Keller



# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

## Additional Material

‘The study and practice of leadership begins with our interior life – it is our own identity and self-understanding that influences all other leadership behaviours and relationships. Without an adequate ‘ascetic’ the best of talents and best of intentions cannot prevent a thinning out into a life that becomes mostly impersonation.’

Eugene Peterson

‘Your character is essentially the sum of your habits. It is how you habitually act.’

John Maxwell

‘One can acquire everything in solitude – except character.’

Marie Henri Beyle

‘The biblical leader reveals a character shaped in relationship to God that spills over into all relationships. Such leaders live and model the kind of values that they would like to see expressed in the way the organisation or community conducts its corporate life. Leadership flows from character, and leaders add value to all of the relationships in which they are engaged; that is why people care about leadership.’

Walter Wright

‘I’ve seen too many leaders who have that formidable combination of competence and ambition but lack integrity and they succeed only in the short term, if that. I call them ‘destructive achievers’ and they are dangerous.’

Warren Bennis

‘Nothing is more demanding of my character as leader than to stand in humility before the corrective promptings of the Holy Spirit.’

Jack Hayford

‘I believe that it is profoundly true that only those who have learnt to obey and come under the authority of God, and of others, can exercise leadership with any authority. Unless we have first accepted the yoke of Christ and learnt to be led, we can never be fit to lead others.’

John Perry



# SESSION 4: DEVELOPING CHARACTER

## Additional Material

### Reflections on Character

Be careful of your thoughts,  
for your thoughts become your words;  
Be careful of your words,  
for your words become your deeds;  
Be careful of your deeds,  
for your deeds become your habits;  
Be careful of your habits;  
for your habits become your character;  
Be careful of your character;  
for your character becomes your destiny.

Reputation is what you are supposed to be.  
Character is what you are.  
Reputation is a photograph.  
Character is your face.  
Reputation is what you have when you come to a new place.  
Character is what you have when you go away.  
Reputation is learned in an hour.  
Character does not come to light for years.  
Reputation is made in a moment.  
Character is built in a lifetime.  
Reputation grows like a mushroom.  
Character grows like an oak.  
Reputation is made from a single newspaper report.  
Character is built from a life of toil.  
Reputation makes you rich or poor.  
Character makes you happy or miserable.  
Reputation is what people say about you on your tombstone.  
Character is what the angels say about you around the throne of God.

