



**LEADERSHIP
EDGE INC.**

Two Tests for God-honoring Leadership

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Hebrews 11:6 ESV

Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.

Psalms 115:1 NIV

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16 ESV

Leadership development has been the focus of my career. As a result, I've learned to use several leadership evaluation tools, and I've developed a few as well. Leadership diagnostic tools usually focus on some aspect of knowledge, skills, character, or vision. They can be helpful for a growing leader's development.

But the basis for evaluation deepens when one aims to be a God-honoring leader. The developmental areas of knowledge, skills, character, and vision are still relevant and essential. In addition, the Bible adds two core tests for the God-honoring leader. The first is the test of faith and the second is the test of intention.

For any form of leadership to honor God, it must be done in *faith*. Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith, it is impossible to please God. It further defines faith as believing that God is always with us (that He exists) and that He will reward or bless us when we seek Him. A very accurate indicator of leadership done by faith is the prayerfulness attached to it. God-honoring leaders learn to pray, audibly or silently, in the beginning, during and at the end of meetings. Prayerfulness is not, for them, a superstition or meaningless obligation. It is essential for the leadership initiative to succeed in a God-honoring way.

As important as the test of faith is the test of *intention* (Psalm 115:1 NIV). The intention of leadership that honors God must be for Him to be glorified, not the leader nor their organization. A God-honoring leader has a God-centered view of life and leadership. They know that God is the source of every good thing and that all of life emanates from Him and revolves around Him. Whatever good that comes from any leadership endeavor is not for us to grab for ourselves. Rather any good that comes is from Him, by Him and to Him (Romans 11:36 ESV). If glorifying God is the intention, then the means and the end of the leadership endeavor must be glorifying to Him. The means or way leadership is done must be with excellence and righteousness. The end of leadership is the hopeful accomplishment of the mission or goal for the glory of God.

One summer, I worked for a man named T.A., who at the time was in his sixties. I was eighteen and marveled at how this man led in a way that honored God. He was one of the hardest-working people I had ever met. But there was always calm about him enhanced by regular moments of prayer. He led a staff of thirty or so people to accomplish much with modest operational funding and offering low pay. We worked hard that summer because of T.A.'s



example. But even more so, we worked hard because we knew that with him as our leader, our goal was to honor God in our faith and intention. His faith and intention became ours. With much imperfection along the way, I learned that summer what it means and what it looks like to be a God-honoring leader. And my life has never been the same.

Emerging leaders and established leaders must continue to grow in knowledge, skills, character, and vision. They do this for greater effectiveness as they lead others. Leaders who aim to honor God in their leadership must also pass the tests of faith and intention. The core test of God-honoring leadership, in any context, is that it is done in faith and for the glory and honor of God. As we grow to be this kind of leader, may those around us see our good work and glorify our Father, who is in heaven (Matthew 5:16 ESV).

For Reflection

1. Begin with prayer, asking God to meet with you and guide you as you contemplate these Scripture passages and thoughts.
2. Think of the people in your spheres of influence. What is your intention(s) with those that you influence? Would you say that bringing glory to God tends to be your ultimate intention? What are the chief competitors with God's glory in your influence?
3. Prayer is how we engage with God's power and His purposes. What steps might you take to incorporate more moments of prayer in your leadership? How might you do that today and in the days that follow?
4. Read back through the reflection, stopping for moments of prayer and jotting down ideas on how to grow to be a God-honoring leader.