

# LeaderID: How to Identify High-Potential Emerging Leaders



Jesus, the Master Builder of leaders, spent the entire night in prayer before choosing the Twelve. Jesus prayed a simple prayer of blessing over the “loaves and fishes” and fed 5000, and yet He prayed all night before choosing the Twelve! This dramatically demonstrates the strategic importance of building the “right ones”; this is one of the key principles in leader development.

The cost of building the wrong ones is very high. Effective leader development requires a large investment of time, energy, focus and financial resources. We must build the right ones!

*The largest stumbling block to leadership development in the global church is that we train the wrong people. (Ralph Winter)*

How to identify high-potential leaders is an issue of uncertainty and even confusion around the world. **LeaderID** is a simple but biblical, robust, proven and practical model for identifying the right emerging leaders to invest in.

## THE THREE PARTS OF LEADER DEVELOPMENT

From the broadest perspective, leader development involves three things: *identification* (choosing the right ones to build), *development* (the building of those leaders using a holistic model), and *deployment* (ongoing support and building of their lives).



We must give strong attention to each!

In Christian leader development work, too often we focus mainly on the design and execution of the training itself, but if we’re not also giving strong attention to identification and deployment, we will often end up frustrated.

But how do we identify the right ones?

Traditionally, we have tried to do this in ways that have not worked particularly well. For example:

- Can you afford the tuition?
- Who are you related to?
- What degree do you have?
- Are you available?
- Are you faithful?
- Do I like you?
- It doesn’t matter who you are – we can fix you!

Is there a better and more biblical way to identify the right ones?

## LEADERS THINK AND ACT

“Leadership” means movement. Leaders help people move to a better place in the purposes of God. Fundamentally, this means that leaders do two things: leaders think and leaders act.

First, leaders challenge the status quo and pursue the highest purposes of God for all of us. Then they take responsibility and act. They don’t wait for someone to tell them what to do.

In the LeaderID model, these are the two things we must look for as we identify high-potential emerging leaders. Do they think? Do they act?

## WE MUST OBSERVE THEIR LIVES

To know who is thinking and acting, we must observe their lives. This is the role of the community around them.

In Acts 16, Paul chose Timothy:

*Paul came to ... Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived ... The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey ... (Acts 16:1-3)*

Paul knew that Timothy had apostolic potential because Timothy's community recognized that he was already taking responsibility and doing extensive and effective ministry in several cities. Timothy was thinking and acting, and his community affirmed this.

## WE MUST DEEPLY DEPEND ON GOD

Identification of the right ones is a deeply spiritual exercise. We must depend on God to show us whom He has chosen. Jesus knew what was in the heart of man, yet He spent the entire night in prayer before He chose the Twelve (Luke 6:12-13). Also, when Paul chose Timothy there was a deep engaging with God at the time (1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6).

## A SIMPLE MODEL

This is our simple model for choosing the right ones:

- Look for those who think
- Look for those who act
- This requires observation of their lives
- Deeply depend on God

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

Here are some key characteristics of thinking and acting.

Thinking:	Acting:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning – especially from mistakes</li><li>• Reflective</li><li>• Adaptable</li><li>• Teachable</li><li>• Faces reality – both within and without</li><li>• Thinks strategically and conceptually</li><li>• Holistic approach</li><li>• Embraces ambiguity</li><li>• Thinks interdependently</li><li>• Practical orientation, not just theoretical</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motivated to lead</li><li>• Takes responsibility and initiative</li><li>• Passion for the highest</li><li>• Resilience</li><li>• Challenges the status quo</li><li>• Energizes others, bringing out their best</li><li>• Endurance; finishes tasks – stubborn passion</li><li>• Effective communicator</li><li>• Not afraid to make decisions</li><li>• Can lead without positional authority</li></ul>