



WEEK 9

1ST SEMESTER · FOUNDATION & IDENTITY

Jesus – The Center and Circumference of the Leader's Life

Our Example, Our Center, and Our Lord

SPIRITUAL THEME

Jesus – Example, Center, and Lord

Leaders: David Kyakulaga · Bernd Broschek

PERSONAL THEME

Living with Jesus daily – holy, close, disciplined

Bwembe Jesus Follower Bible School

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Spiritual Theme: Jesus – Our Example, Our Center, and Our Lord **Personal Theme:** Living with Jesus Daily – Holy, Close, and Disciplined **Main Bible Texts:** Hebrews 12:1–3; John 15:1–11; Philippians 2:5–11 **Audience:** Bible students in Uganda **Language:** Simple English **Theological Direction:** Bible-faithful, evangelical, Christ-centered **Bible Translation Used:** World English Bible, public domain

Teacher's Note

This lecture is written in simple English. Read the Bible texts aloud, then teach slowly with examples and questions.

The main message is this: A Christian leader is first a follower of Jesus. His life must not be built around his own name, power, position, or ministry success. His whole life must be built around Jesus Christ.

1. Introduction – The Danger of the "Professional" Leader

Dear students, today we speak about Jesus Christ as the center of the leader's life.

Ministry can become dangerous for the heart. A person can learn how to preach, pray in public, visit the sick, lead meetings, and collect offerings. People may call him "Pastor," "Teacher," or "Man of God." But while his public ministry grows, his private love for Jesus may become cold.

This is the danger of becoming a "professional" leader. A professional knows how to do the work, but his heart may not be close to Christ.

In many communities, people expect a leader to be a "Big Man." A Big Man has power, respect, and a good seat. But in the Kingdom of God, greatness is different. The greatest person is the one who is most like Jesus.

Jesus is the Son of God, yet He humbled Himself. He served. He obeyed the Father. He gave His life for sinners.

So today we ask: What kind of leader does Jesus want to form in us?

Not a leader who builds his own name. Not a leader who demands honor. Not a leader who uses people. Jesus wants leaders who live close to Him, follow His example, obey His authority, and serve His people with humility.

Before we are leaders, we are followers. Our life is not about our own name. It is about the Name above every name.

2. Bible Reading: John 15:1-11

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already pruned clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch can't bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man doesn't remain in me, he is thrown out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, you will ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you. In this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; and so you will be my disciples. Even as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have spoken these things to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be made full." (John 15:1-11)

3. Teaching: Jesus Is Our Center – The Source of Life

Jesus says, "I am the true vine." A branch cannot live by itself. If you cut a branch away from the vine, it may look green for a short time, but it is dying. It has no life in itself.

Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. Our spiritual life, strength, fruit, and ministry must come from Him.

This is very important for leaders. A leader may be busy. He may preach, travel, organize meetings, and serve many people. But Jesus says, "Apart from me you can do nothing." He does not say, "You can do a little." He says, "You can do nothing."

We can do religious activities without a close heart to Christ. But we cannot bear true spiritual fruit without Him.

To remain in Jesus means to stay close to Him, trust Him, listen to His words, obey Him, depend on Him, and live in His love. A branch has one main task: stay connected to the vine. In the same way, the leader's first task is to remain in Christ.

Many leaders focus first on fruit: numbers, money, church growth, respect. But Jesus teaches us to focus first on connection. If the connection is healthy, fruit will come in God's time.

Jesus also says the Father prunes the fruitful branch. Pruning can be painful. God may remove distractions, correct pride, expose wrong motives, or allow trials. But for the true believer, pruning is not destruction. It is loving preparation for more fruit.

A leader who does not remain in Christ becomes dry, harsh, proud, or empty. A leader who remains in Jesus becomes fruitful, humble, joyful, and steady.

4. Bible Reading: Philippians 2:5–11

*"Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, yes, the death of the cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
(Philippians 2:5–11)*

5. Teaching: Jesus Is Our Example – The Servant Mindset

Philippians 2 shows us the mind of Christ. Jesus was in the highest place. He is truly God. Yet He did not use His position selfishly. He humbled Himself.

He took the form of a servant. He came into the world as a man. He touched the sick, welcomed the weak, washed feet, carried burdens, and obeyed the Father completely.

Then He went even lower. He became obedient to death, even death on a cross. The Son of God humbled Himself to save sinners.

Then God highly exalted Him and gave Him the Name above every name.

This teaches us: In God's Kingdom, the way up is the way down. True greatness is humility, obedience, and service.

This challenges the "Big Man" culture. In the world, a leader often wants to be served. He wants the best chair, public honor, and special treatment. But Jesus shows us that true leadership is not about being served. True leadership is about serving.

If the King of the universe washed feet, then no work is too small for a Bible student. If Jesus served sinners, then a Christian leader must not be ashamed to serve poor people, children, widows, sick people, and people who cannot give anything back.

A proud leader asks, "How can these people help my ministry?"

A Christlike leader asks, "How can I help these people know and follow Jesus?"

Christian authority must look like Jesus: holy, humble, loving, and obedient to the Father.

6. Bible Reading: Hebrews 12:1–3

"Therefore let's also, seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who has endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, that you don't grow weary, fainting in your souls." (Hebrews 12:1–3)

7. Teaching: Jesus Is Our Lord – The One We Look To

Hebrews 12 describes the Christian life like a race. This race requires endurance. A runner must not carry unnecessary weight, and he must keep his eyes on the goal.

The writer says we must lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us.

Sin is always dangerous. Secret sin weakens public ministry. Hidden pride damages leadership. Sexual sin, greed, anger, bitterness, and lies entangle a man and make him spiritually weak.

But a weight may not always be sinful in itself. It may be a habit, ambition, tradition, comfort, relationship, or fear that slows us down. For one man, the weight may be the desire for respect. For another, fear of family pressure. For another, too much time on the phone.

A serious leader must ask: What is slowing me down in my race with Jesus?

Then Hebrews says we must look to Jesus. Do not fix your eyes on critics, money, success, problems, or other leaders with jealousy. Fix your eyes on Jesus.

Jesus is the author and perfecter of faith. He endured the cross and is now seated at the right hand of God. When we become tired, criticized, weak, or discouraged, we must consider Him.

A leader who looks mainly at himself becomes proud or discouraged. A leader who looks mainly at people becomes afraid or bitter. A leader who looks to Jesus finds strength to continue.

8. The Three Offices of Christ – Prophet, Priest, and King

Evangelical Christians often speak about the three offices of Christ. Jesus is our Prophet, Priest, and King.

Jesus is our Prophet. He shows us the truth. Christian leaders do not invent their own message. We do not preach our opinions as the Word of God. We listen to Christ and speak His Word faithfully.

Jesus is our Priest. He offered Himself for our sins and intercedes for us. This gives the leader security. You do not have to pretend to be perfect in order to be loved by God. Your acceptance is

in Christ. When you fail, do not hide. Come to Him.

Jesus is our King. He has all authority. This gives the leader courage. We do not need to fear people more than God. We do not need to obey traditions that oppose Christ. The King is with us.

A healthy leader needs all three truths: Jesus guides him as Prophet, forgives and strengthens him as Priest, and rules and protects him as King.

9. Living with Jesus Daily – Holy, Close, and Disciplined

If Jesus is the center, we must live with Him daily. A close walk with Jesus does not happen by accident. It needs grace and daily habits.

A fire needs wood. If no one adds wood, the fire becomes weak. In the same way, a leader's spiritual life becomes weak if he does not feed it with prayer, the Word, obedience, and fellowship with God.

First, we need the secret place. A leader must find time alone with God. In Uganda, your home or village may be busy and noisy. But you can still find your place: early in the morning, under a tree, before others wake up, or late in the evening. The important thing is that you meet with God.

Second, we need the Word. Do not read the Bible only to prepare sermons. Read it to feed your own soul. A cook may prepare food for many people, but if he never eats, he becomes weak.

Third, we need holiness. To be holy means to be set apart for God. A holy leader says, "My body belongs to Jesus. My tongue belongs to Jesus. My money belongs to Jesus. My phone belongs to Jesus. My family life belongs to Jesus."

Fourth, we need obedience. Jesus says that remaining in His love is connected with keeping His commandments. Obedience is not the enemy of love. Obedience is the fruit of love.

10. Practical Application for Church Workers

Ask yourself: Am I building my own name, or am I lifting up the name of Jesus?

Take the feet-washing test. Find a way to serve someone who cannot repay you. Help someone poor. Visit someone forgotten. Encourage a child. Do a small job without announcing it. This protects your heart from pride.

Practice the "look to Jesus first" habit. When a problem comes in your church or family, do not run first to gossip, fear, or anger. Go first to Jesus. Pray. Open the Word. Ask, "Lord, what pleases You here?"

Remove one weight. Ask God to show you one thing that is slowing your race. It may be sin, distraction, fear of people, pride, or a habit. Begin with the thing God is showing you now.

Choose a real secret place. Do not only say, "I should pray more." Choose a time and a place this week.

11. Call to Respond

Dear students, Jesus must not be only part of our ministry. He must be the center of our life.

If your ministry is active but your heart is far from Jesus, come back to Him. If you have enjoyed being seen as important, humble yourself. If you have used leadership to be served instead of serving others, repent. If your prayer life is weak, return to the secret place. If you have carried sin or unnecessary weights, lay them aside.

Jesus is the true vine. Without Him, we can do nothing.

Jesus is the humble servant. We must follow His example.

Jesus is the Lord. We must fix our eyes on Him and run the race with endurance.

A leader's true strength is not first in his voice, title, education, or position. His true strength is found in living close to Jesus.

12. Discussion Questions

1. Why is it dangerous for a church worker to become a "professional" leader with a cold heart?
2. What does it mean in daily life to remain in Jesus like a branch in the vine?
3. How does Philippians 2 challenge the "Big Man" idea of leadership?
4. What small acts of service can protect a leader from pride?
5. What sins or weights can slow down a leader in the race of faith?
6. Which office of Christ do you need most right now: Prophet, Priest, or King? Why?
7. What is the difference between reading the Bible for sermons and reading it to feed your own soul?
8. Where and when can you meet with Jesus alone this week?

13. Short Group Exercise

Divide the students into small groups. Give each group one situation and ask: What would worldly leadership look like? What would Christlike leadership look like?

Situation 1: A pastor wants the best seat everywhere and becomes angry when people do not honor him. **Situation 2:** A Bible student is good at preaching but almost never prays alone.

Situation 3: A church leader corrects others harshly, but says, "I am just speaking truth." **Situation 4:** A young leader is jealous because another student is being invited to preach more often.

Situation 5: A leader is tired and discouraged because people criticize him.

14. Memory Sentences for Students

- Jesus is the true vine. I am only a branch.
- Apart from Jesus, I can do nothing.
- A Christian leader is first a follower.
- The greatest leader is the one who serves like Jesus.
- Jesus is my Prophet, my Priest, and my King.
- I must lay aside sin and every weight.
- I must fix my eyes on Jesus.
- My ministry is not about my name. It is about His name.

15. Closing Prayer

Father in heaven,

We thank You for Jesus Christ, Your Son. We confess that without Him we can do nothing. Forgive us when we try to lead in our own strength. Forgive us when we seek our own name, honor, or position.

Lord Jesus, teach us to remain in You like branches in the vine. Let Your words remain in us. Make our lives fruitful for the glory of the Father.

Give us the mind of Christ. Teach us humility. Teach us to serve. Remove pride from our hearts. Help us not to lead like bosses, but like servants who follow Jesus.

Help us to lay aside every sin and every weight. Help us to fix our eyes on Jesus. Strengthen us when we are tired. Encourage us when we are criticized. Keep us faithful in the race.

Make us holy, close to You, and disciplined in daily life. May our leadership lift up the name of Jesus, not our own name.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.