



 **CORNERSTONE**
for women leaders

FAITH DRIVEN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Evaluating Preparedness for **LEADERSHIP**



INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the capacity to influence others to achieve worthwhile results. Many women have excelled in leadership roles across various professional sectors. Although many women possess innate qualities that position them to be great leaders, it is important to remember that leaders are made not born. With appropriate coaching, training, and ongoing support, you can reach your full potential as a leader.

In the ever-evolving landscape of modern workplaces, the value of gender diversity in leadership teams has gained significant recognition. As organizations strive for greater inclusivity, a study conducted by McKinsey and Company in 2020 unveils a compelling insight: companies with gender-diverse executive teams not only excel in profitability but also contribute to heightened productivity and reduced inefficiencies within the company.¹ This shift underscores the vital role gender diversity plays in shaping the future of successful businesses.

As individuals aspiring to lead, it is imperative to evaluate one's readiness to step into the role, recognizing that it's not only a matter of ethical responsibility but also a strategic advantage in the modern workplace.

Biblical Lessons

The Bible contains numerous examples of Godly men and women who boldly stepped into leadership roles. Joseph is one example of a person who prepared, through unexpected circumstances and challenges in life, to embrace this role. Joseph demonstrated leadership qualities in Potiphar's house, as a slave, and in prison. Joseph did not allow unexpected difficulties to corrupt him or turn away from his faith in God. Instead, Joseph demonstrated integrity and commitment to his principles.



Joseph was a man of honor, integrity, and wisdom and he had a zeal for hard work. It was clear that he had administrative skills and could govern a large number of people. Potiphar quickly and accurately recognized these qualities in Joseph and promoted him to oversee his entire estate. Throughout his time working for Potiphar, he refused to compromise his values or his morals, even when faced of temptation.

Over time, Joseph not only developed skills for strategic planning, communication, building relationships, and financial management, his capacity for generosity and forgiveness deepened. When he was made the second in command, he had the opportunity to get revenge on his brothers who sold him into slavery. But he didn't. He forgave the brothers that plotted against him and ultimately reconciled his family.



Modern Context

We can gain inspiration from many contemporary woman leaders. An example of a woman leader that fought and struggled on her way to a leadership position was Corrie Ten Boom. She was a Dutch Christian who played a significant role in helping the Jews escape Nazi persecution in World War II. She hid the Jews in a secret compartment within their home in the Netherlands.

When they were discovered and arrested, Corrie did not allow it to discourage her, she lived a life of serving people and spreading God's love. Despite the challenges she encountered she was able to overcome the challenges and became a respected and influential Christian Leader who wrote over thirty books that has served as motivation for many people.



Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, who was the first female President of Liberia, fought against any act of corruption in her country. She helped to resolve international conflicts between Liberia and other nations, and she helped to rebuild the Liberian economy.

Ruth Baber Ginsburg was considered to be an influential figure in the United States. She served as a Supreme Court justice for twenty-seven years, from 1993 to 2020. She fought for gender equality, was an exemplary woman's activist, and an advocate of justice.

These women leaders paved the way in their respective fields and the impact of their efforts continues to shape the world into a better place.





Leadership Challenges & Strategies

There are various challenges women may encounter when taking on the mantle of leadership. Acknowledging these challenges is important, however each challenge should be seen as a stepping stone to greatness and not a stumbling block. Some of the common challenges women face are:

✦ **Not recognizing your potential:**

Most of the women leaders who are making an impact in the world today have overcome personal fears and doubts to step into leadership roles. Recognizing your potential as a leader requires time, self-reflection, dedication, and surrounding yourself with a solid support system.

✦ **Discrimination in the place of work or society at large:**

Gender discrimination in leadership is a well-documented occurrence. Despite progress, sexual harassment, hostile work environment, and subtle biases are still obstacles. Women of color, and women with disabilities, face compounded obstacles to their professional advancement, and as a result are less likely to undertake leadership roles. These barriers can have a deleterious effect on women's self-esteem and their ability to realize their potential.



Conclusion

As a woman aspiring to assume leadership positions, it is essential to assess your preparedness for these roles. It is equally important to remember that wisdom transcends strategy. Aspiring leaders should pause to pray and seek God's guidance before stepping into these influential roles. In this moment of reflection and connection, we can find the clarity, strength, and discernment needed to lead with integrity and compassion.

In times of uncertainty or challenge, remember that leadership is not just about wielding authority; it's about empowering others, fostering inclusivity, and igniting positive change. As you embark on your leadership journey, let faith and purpose be your guiding beacons. Trust in your ability to make a meaningful impact, not only for your organization but also for the greater good. In the end, leadership is not just about reaching the destination but about inspiring others to join you on the journey toward a brighter, more inclusive future.



References:

1. McKinsey & Company. Diversity wins: How inclusion matters. 2020. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/diversity%20and%20inclusion/diversity%20wins%20how%20inclusion%20matters/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters-vf.pdf>



ACTION PLAN

Individual/Group Discussion Questions:

The following questions help to assess your readiness to lead:

- 1 Why do you want to lead?
- 2 Which leadership roles have you held in the past?
- 3 What steps have you taken to develop “soft” as well as “hard” skills?
- 4 Are you interested in the professional development of others?
- 5 Describe a time when you handled conflict or disagreement on a team.
- 6 How do you give and respond to constructive criticism?
- 7 What was your biggest accomplishment leading a team?
- 8 How do you determine priorities when leading a project?
- 9 How do you motivate others?
- 10 Who do you consider to be an inspiring leader and why?



Top 10 Leadership Competencies

Use the following table to evaluate your leadership competencies then have a coach or mentor evaluate you. Afterwards, compare and discuss the results.

Themes	Competencies	Score (scale of 1-10)
Strong ethics & safety	Has high ethical and moral standards	
Self-organizing	Provides goals and objectives with loose guidelines/direction	
	Clearly communicates expectations	
Efficient learning	Has the flexibility to change opinions	
Nurtures growth	Is committed to ongoing training	
Connection and belonging	Communicates often and openly	
	Is open to new ideas and approaches	
	Creates a feeling of succeeding and failing together	
	Helps others grow into a next-generation leader	
	Provides safety for trial and error	



RESOURCES

Additional leadership assessment tools and tests.

The Biblical DISC

The biblical DISC assessment blends knowledge from scripture and your behavioral style to provide a roadmap for your behavioral style and strengths.

www.leadlikejesus.com/biblical-disc

Harvard Business Review

A leadership assessment that gives you immediate feedback on your leadership style based on eight leadership archetypes.

www.hbr.org/2015/06/assessment-whats-your-leadership-style

16Personalities

Research-based profiles of 16 personality types to learn what drives, inspires, motivates different personality types to help you better understand yourself and the people on your team.

www.16personalities.com

Saville Leadership Assessment

The leadership assessment helps you identify leadership potential, develop exceptional leaders, and mitigate leadership risk.

www.savilleassessment.com/lead-talent

IHHP Emotional Intelligence and Performing Under Pressure Assessment

The assessment measures two major aspects: emotional intelligence (EQ) and performance under pressure. Each test is taken separately and the results are compared together to assess a person's performance as a leader.

www.ihhp.com/free-eq-quiz





CORNERSTONE
for women leaders

FAITH DRIVEN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

www.cornerstoneforwomenleaders.com