



ABIDEROOTED

When Influence Grows Faster Than Character

A Servant-Leadership Diagnostic for Keeping
Character Ahead of Platform



LEADERS · LEADERSHIP GUIDE · FREE RESOURCE

Using this guide

Read the full Scripture passage before the reflection. Choose one practical response, then pray in your own words. Work at a sustainable pace; days and sessions may be repeated. People may pass on a group question.

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Scripture quotations use the King James Version (KJV). Short quotations may be excerpts; read the cited passage in context. Prayer starters and reflections are devotional writing, not additional Scripture.

Reviewed edition | October 2026 | AbideRooted

Begin Here

A leadership diagnostic guide for Christian leaders whose influence has grown faster than their character. It includes a character/influence gap check, warning signs, an accountability action, and a 30-day formation plan.

You asked for more influence. You prayed for greater reach. You worked for the results. And then it happened: the platform grew faster than your soul could carry it. Now you feel the weight of every eye, every expectation, every decision. The gap between who you are in public and who you are in private is widening, and you know it. This is not a crisis of competence; it is a crisis of character. The good news is that God is not surprised by your success. He is not intimidated by your platform. He is inviting you to let your character catch up to your influence - not through striving, but through surrender. This guide is a diagnostic, not a lecture. It will help you see where your influence has outrun your formation, and it will give you a practical path to close that gap. You will not find quick fixes or formulas here. You will find honest questions, biblical truth, and a way back to the heart of servant leadership. Let us begin.

DIAGNOSTIC

The Character/Influence Gap Check

Philippians 2:3-4

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Influence is the capacity to shape others. Character is the inner formation that makes that shaping holy. When influence grows faster than character, we begin to rely on position, personality, or performance instead of the Spirit. The first step is honest assessment. This diagnostic is not about shame; it is about clarity. You cannot close a gap you refuse to see.

Put It Into Practice

For each statement, rate yourself honestly on a scale of 1 (rarely true) to 5 (almost always true). Do not answer as you wish you were; answer as you are. Every statement describes a constructive habit. Review low ratings with a trusted peer; this is a reflection aid, not a validated test or a measure of your standing with God.

1. I regularly seek feedback from those I lead, especially critical feedback.
2. I value Christlike conduct more than winning an argument.
3. I ground my identity in Christ rather than my role or results.
4. I am quick to listen and slow to speak in disagreements.
5. I am comfortable when others receive credit for work I initiated.
6. I acknowledge both my strengths and weaknesses honestly.
7. I am willing to change my mind when presented with new evidence.
8. I regularly confess my faults to a trusted peer.
9. I am more concerned with pleasing God than with pleasing people.
10. I am able to rejoice when others succeed, even if it means my own influence diminishes.

Reflect & Talk Together

1. Which statement surprised you most? Why?
2. Where do you see the greatest gap between your influence and your character?
3. What is one area where you have been avoiding honest feedback?

Prayer

Lord, you see me as I am, not as I pretend to be. Give me the courage to see myself truly. Expose the gaps between my public influence and my private character. I trust you to do this work in me, even when it is uncomfortable. In Jesus' name, Amen.

TEACHING

The Servant Leader's Heart

Philippians 2:5-8

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Jesus did not cling to His rights. He did not use His power for His own advantage. He emptied Himself. This is the pattern for every leader who wants to be great in God's kingdom. Servant leadership is not a technique; it is a mindset. It is the willingness to lay down your reputation, your comfort, and your agenda for the sake of others. When influence grows faster than character, we are tempted to hold on to what we have earned. But Jesus shows us a different way: release, humility, and obedience.

Put It Into Practice

Read Philippians 2:5-8 slowly. Then write a one-sentence

paraphrase of what it means for you to have the mind of Christ in your current leadership role. Consider a specific situation this week where you can choose humility over self-promotion.

Reflect & Talk Together

1. What rights or privileges are you tempted to cling to as a leader?
2. How does the example of Christ challenge your current leadership style?
3. What would it look like to empty yourself in your role this week?

Prayer

Father, thank you for the example of Jesus, who did not grasp equality with you but humbled Himself. Forgive me for the ways I have grasped for influence and reputation. Teach me to have the same mind as Christ. Help me to empty myself for the good of others and for your glory. Amen.

DIAGNOSTIC

Warning Signs: When Influence Outpaces Character

Proverbs 16:18

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

The Bible is honest about the dangers of pride. When influence grows faster than character, pride often creeps in unnoticed. We begin to believe our own press. We surround ourselves with yes-people. We become defensive when challenged. We take credit for what God has done. These are warning signs that our character is not keeping pace with our platform. Recognizing them early can save us from a painful fall.

Put It Into Practice

Check the warning signs that are present in your leadership: ___ I am rarely questioned or challenged. ___ I feel threatened when others succeed. ___ I am more aware of others' faults than my own. ___ I am quick to defend my decisions. ___ I have a hard time admitting when I am wrong. ___ I am more concerned with my reputation than with the truth. ___ I find it difficult to celebrate others' victories. ___ I am often irritated by those who disagree with me. ___ I am more comfortable with praise than with constructive criticism. ___ I have a sense of entitlement about my position.

Reflect & Talk Together

1. Which warning signs are most present in your life?
2. What is one warning sign you need to take seriously this week?
3. Who in your life can speak truth to you without fear?

Prayer

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Expose the pride that hides in my heart. Give me the grace to repent and to walk in humility. Amen.

TEACHING

The Accountability Action

Proverbs 27:17

“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

Character formation does not happen in isolation. We need others who will speak into our lives, who will ask hard questions, and who will hold us accountable. This is not about control; it is about love. A true friend will tell you the truth, even when it is uncomfortable. The goal is not to create a system of surveillance but to cultivate a culture of honesty and mutual growth.

Put It Into Practice

Identify one person who will be honest with you about your character. This should be someone who is not under your authority and who has no vested interest in your approval. Ask them if they would be willing to meet with you regularly for accountability. Use the following questions as a starting point:

1. Have you observed any areas where my influence is outrunning my character?
2. Have you seen me act in ways that are inconsistent with the gospel?
3. Are there any patterns of pride, defensiveness, or self-reliance in my leadership?
4. How can I pray for you this week?

Reflect & Talk Together

1. Who is the one person you trust to speak truth into your life?
2. What is holding you back from seeking accountability?
3. How can you create a safe space for honest feedback?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for the gift of community. Help me to be humble enough to receive correction and wise enough to seek it. Bring into my life people who will sharpen me, and make me a sharpening friend to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

IMPLEMENTATION

Your 30-Day Character Formation Plan

James 1:22

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

A diagnostic without action is just information. The goal is transformation. This plan is designed to help you take one small step each day toward closing the gap between your influence and your character. It is not about perfection; it is about direction. As you practice these habits, you will find that your character begins to catch up with your platform.

Put It Into Practice

For the next 30 days, commit to the following:

1. Daily: Spend 10 minutes in prayer, asking God to reveal any area where your character is not matching your influence.
2. Weekly: Meet with your accountability partner and go through the questions from Section 4.
3. Weekly: Practice one act of servant leadership that no one will see.
4. Daily: Read one chapter of the Gospel of John, focusing on how Jesus led.
5. Weekly: Write a brief reflection on what you are learning about humility and leadership.

Reflect & Talk Together

1. What is the first step you will take today?
2. What obstacles do you anticipate, and how will you overcome them?
3. Who will you ask to hold you accountable to this plan?

Prayer

Father, I want to be a doer of your word, not just a hearer. Give me the discipline to follow through on this plan. Help me to see where you are at work in my life and to cooperate with your Spirit. I trust you to complete the good work you have begun in me. Amen.

Continue Abiding

The gap between your influence and your character is not a life sentence. It is a call to deeper formation. God, who began a good work in you, will be faithful to complete it. As you walk in humility, seek accountability, and practice servant leadership, you will find that your character begins to catch up with your platform. And when that happens, your influence will not be a source of pride but a vessel for God's glory. May you lead from a heart that is fully formed in Christ, and may your leadership be a reflection of His grace.

Go Deeper

This guide has given you a starting point for closing the gap between influence and character. But the journey is deeper than a diagnostic. In 'Before You Lead Them,' we explore the foundational principles of servant leadership that prepare your heart for the platform God has given you. If you are ready to go deeper into what it means to lead from a place of character, this book will walk with you through the essential disciplines of a leader whose influence is rooted in Christ.