



Wholehearted Leadership Assessment

In John 13, Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, that He had come from God and was returning to God. Knowing that, He got up from the table, set aside His outer robe, wrapped a towel around His waist, and began washing the feet of His disciples.

Luke tells us that the same night, those disciples had argued about which of them was the greatest. Jesus' identity was settled, so His position never needed defending. That security is what freed Him to lead from the posture of a servant, always.

This assessment is designed to reveal posture. It isn't a test to pass, and it isn't a checklist of experiences every leader should experience. Some of these questions describe situations you may never have faced: being passed over, serving under someone you struggle to respect, leading people who are working against you. That's okay. You don't need to have lived every scenario for a question to be useful. If one doesn't fit your story, think of the closest version you've experienced, or ask yourself, "If this happened tomorrow, what would rise up in me first?"

Posture is the default of the heart. It's what shows up when you're tired, unnoticed, or under pressure. Most of us will find both the title and the towel-based postures in our answers, and honesty, that's not failure. Jesus didn't wash feet to shame His disciples. He did it to show them His way of leadership.

So hold your answers with grace, and look for patterns rather than verdicts. The biggest risk with any self-assessment like this is that people score who they want to be rather than who they are. Honesty is the better way.

If you have a trusted friend or teammate, consider asking them to answer a few of these about you. The people we serve alongside of sometimes can see our posture with a little more clarity than we do. Whether you carry a title or not, and whether you've led for forty years or four months, in Christ, there's a towel within reach for each of us.

How To Assess

Use a scale from 1-5 to answer each of the ten questions.

1 = Mostly title

2-4 = Depends on the circumstance/day/person

5 = Mostly towel



Step 1: Which leadership test are you facing right now? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ **Personal Test** - Inside You
- ☐ **External Test** - Outside You (Things you cannot control)
- ☐ **Culture Test** - Within the Team/Church
- ☐ **Growth Test** - Problems/Challenges/Complaints Growth Creates

Step 2: Answer honestly.

Let's move onto our current leadership posture.

For each question, we are going to use title for worldly leadership and towel for the leadership of Jesus. This is simply to understand your posture. There is a whole-world of healthy discussions with each of these questions. However, if your posture is incorrect, the healthy conversations might not be getting to the root of your current challenge.

Think hacking at the branches while ignoring the root.

Select the number that best describes your honest answer to each question. Try to differentiate between the "right answer" and an "honest one."

Use a scale from 1-5 to answer each of the questions.

- 1 = Mostly title
- 2-4 = Depends on the circumstance/day/person
- 5 = Mostly towel



1. Does at least one trusted person know what I'm struggling with right now, including sin?

1: I keep my struggles private to protect how I'm seen.

5: Someone I trust knows where I'm struggling. I tell them before I'm found out.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

2. When I'm overlooked, passed over, set aside, or someone else gets the credit, what do I grieve first: the mission or my standing?

1: I feel it mainly as a personal wound.

5: I still feel it, but I care most that the work got done, whoever gets named.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

3. Can I serve fully under or alongside someone I privately think is less capable, less experienced, or out of touch?

1: I quietly believe I'm better, and it shows in how I follow or partner.

5: I serve wholeheartedly anyway, as Jesus did (John 13:3).

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

4. When pressure comes that I can't control, do I tell the truth about it, or do I overstate it, downplay it, or give up (drama, diminishing, despair)?

1: I spin the storm to protect how I look.

5: I name it honestly and lean on the Spirit in it.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

5. Is my effort and conviction the same whether the room is full or empty, online or in person, and whether or not anyone important is watching?

1: My effort and message rise and fall with who's watching and what they can offer.

5: I'm the same in the empty room and the full one.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

6. How do I treat people who oppose, criticize, or disagree with me?

1: I withdraw respect or warmth when loyalty isn't returned.

5: I keep loving them without becoming a people-pleaser.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel



7. When I talk about my life or ministry, in person or online, do I tell the whole story or the version that makes me look better?

1: Like Ananias and Sapphira, I present part of the story as the whole.

5: I let the truth be the truth, even when it costs me.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

8. Do I use my influence mostly to make room for others, or to protect my position or reputation?

1: My leadership energy goes to defending myself/managing things behind the scenes.

5: I clear a path for others, even at personal cost.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

9. When I notice a small compromise in my team or ministry, do I raise it while it's small, even with someone above me, or do I ignore it or work around it to keep the peace?

1: I protect the image of the ministry.

5: I protect its integrity, knowing darkness never stays in one place.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

10. When complaints or problems surface, do I treat them as a threat to manage or as an opportunity to grow and involve others?

1: I mostly hear criticism as a threat to my leadership.

5: Like the apostles in Acts 6, I hear it as an invitation to clarify my assignment and raise up others.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

11. Am I willing to do the unseen, unglamorous work myself, or do I see some tasks as beneath me?

1: I pass the undesirable jobs down or find ways to avoid them.

5: No task is beneath me. Jesus didn't hand off the foot-washing.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel

12. Do I hold onto work so I stay needed or seen, or release it so others can grow, even if they get the credit or do it better than me?

1: I stay indispensable and keep the credit.

5: I stay faithful to my assignment while making room for others to lead.

Title 1 2 3 4 5 Towel



Two Clarifying Questions

13. If my role, title, or platform were gone tomorrow, would people describe how I treated them the same way?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14. Do I think the people closest to me, like my family or those I serve with every week, describe my leadership the same way the “public/those who don’t know me as well” do?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Step 3: Record your totals

51–60: Towel Postured

The towel comes naturally to you. This is a gift, and also a place to stay curious. High scores can sometimes reflect blind spots, so consider asking someone close to you to score you as well.

36–50: Mixed Posture

You're carrying both. This is where most leaders land. Look at your themes to see where the title tends to show up and under what kind of pressure.

12–35: Title Postured

The title is showing up often right now. This isn't a verdict on your heart or your calling. It's an honest starting point, and honesty is exactly where Jesus meets us. Start growing from one theme, not all of them at once.

Personal Reflection

1. Look back at your answers. Which ones leaned toward the title, and what do they have in common? Where do you already see yourself carrying the towel?
2. As you sit with your answers, what is the Holy Spirit highlighting for you?
3. Think of our team you're part of right now. What would taking up the towel look like here?
4. What one step will you take this week, and who will you invite to check in with you about it?



Understanding the Heart of the Assessment

1. Personal Test (Acts 2): Character at the point of weakness

Theme	#	Question	What It Reveals
Confession	1	<i>Does at least one trusted person know what I'm struggling with right now, including sin?</i>	<i>Whether I'm leading from hiddenness or from accountability. Leaders who confess before they're caught have a safeguard in place.</i>
Recognition	2	<i>When I'm overlooked, passed over, set aside, or someone else gets the credit, what do I grieve first: the mission or my standing?</i>	<i>Where my identity rests: in being seen, or in the work getting done.</i>
Humility	3	<i>Can I serve fully under or alongside someone I privately think is less capable, less experienced, or out of touch?</i>	<i>Hidden pride, the "better than the others" belief Peter carried before the cross.</i>

2. External Test (Acts 4): Courage when I can't control what's happening

Theme	#	Question	What It Reveals
Honesty under pressure	4	<i>When pressure comes that I can't control, do I tell the truth about it, or do I overstate it, downplay it, or give up?</i>	<i>Whether I name the storm accurately or fall into drama, diminishing, or despair.</i>
Consistency	5	<i>Is my effort and conviction the same whether the room is full or empty, online or in person, and whether or not anyone important is watching?</i>	<i>Whether my convictions are settled in advance or shift with the audience.</i>
Love for opponents	6	<i>How do I treat people who oppose, criticize, or disagree with me?</i>	<i>Whether I can love without needing loyalty back, and without becoming a people-pleaser.</i>



3. Culture Test (Acts 5): Integrity in the culture I build

Theme	#	Question	What It Reveals
Truthfulness	7	<i>When I talk about my life or ministry, in person or online, do I tell the whole story or the version that makes me look better?</i>	<i>The gap between image and reality, the Ananias and Sapphira pattern of presenting part as the whole.</i>
Use of influence	8	<i>Do I use my influence mostly to make room for others, or to protect my position or reputation?</i>	<i>Whether my leadership serves others or defends myself.</i>
Addressing compromise	9	<i>When I notice a small compromise in my team or ministry, do I raise it while it's small, even with someone above me, or do I ignore it or work around it to keep the peace?</i>	<i>Whether I protect the ministry's integrity or its image, and whether culture is being shaped "down the hall."</i>

4. Growth Test (Acts 6): Clarity of assignment and raising up others

Theme	#	Question	What It Reveals
Response to problems	10	<i>When complaints or problems surface, do I treat them as a threat to manage or as an opportunity to grow and involve others?</i>	<i>Whether I hear criticism defensively or as an invitation to clarify my assignment and multiply leaders.</i>
Servanthood	11	<i>Am I willing to do the unseen, unglamorous work myself, or do I see some tasks as beneath me?</i>	<i>Whether I'm willing to do anything, or whether I see myself as exempt from the towel.</i>
Releasing control	12	<i>Do I hold onto work so I stay needed or seen, or release it so others can grow, even if they get the credit or do it better than me?</i>	<i>Whether I'm building my indispensability or building other leaders.</i>

5. Clarifying Questions: The person behind the position

Theme	#	Question	What It Reveals
Position vs. person	13	<i>If my role, title, or platform were gone tomorrow, would people describe how I treated them the same way?</i>	<i>Whether my leadership rests on my position or on my character.</i>
Private vs. public	14	<i>Would the people closest to me, like my family and those I serve with every week, describe my leadership the same way the public does?</i>	<i>Whether I'm the same leader at home and up close as I am on the platform.</i>



Group/Team Time

Before You Meet

Complete the Wholehearted Leader Assessment on your own first. In the group, share only what you're ready to share, keep what's shared confidential, and listen more than you fix. The goal is noticing patterns, not scoring well.

Open Together

Which of the four tests are you facing right now?

Which assessment question was hardest to answer honestly, not rightly, and why?

The Four Tests

1. The Personal Test (Acts 2 • Assessment Questions 1–3)

What it reveals: Whether you lead from hiddenness or from accountability.

1. Peter was tested at the very weakness he had just failed. Where might God be giving you a second run at an old weakness?
2. What makes it hard to name a struggle before it becomes a crisis? What would make this group a safer place to do that?

2. The External Test (Acts 4 • Assessment Questions 4–6)

What it reveals: Whether convictions were settled before the storm, or are being shaped by it.

3. Drama, diminishing, or despair: which is your default under pressure? Would the people closest to you agree?
4. Think of someone who opposes or criticizes you. What would loving them, without people-pleasing, look like this week?

3. The Culture Test (Acts 5 • Assessment Questions 7–9)

What it reveals: The gap between what's on the wall and what's really going on down the hall.

5. Where are we, as a team, saying one thing and doing another? What small compromise have we learned to work around?
6. When have you seen a small compromise left alone grow bigger? What would addressing it early have cost, and saved?

4. The Growth Test (Acts 6 • Assessment Questions 10–12)

What it reveals: Whether you're building your indispensability, or building other leaders.

7. What complaint or problem in our ministry right now might be an invitation to raise up someone new?
8. What are you holding onto that someone else could do, and grow by doing? What makes it hard to let go?

Close Together

Across generations: Ask someone at a different stage of leadership, "Which of these tests was hardest for you at my stage?" **Pray in pairs:** "Jesus, be strong where I am weak. Help me take up the towel."

Action Step: List a step I'll take this week. Who I'll tell. When will I tell them by?



Assessment Addendum

The Towel Has a Shadow Side

A high towel score usually signals healthy servant leadership, but not always. Some leaders score high because they over-function: they can't say no, never delegate, and serve their way into burnout. Jesus washed feet knowing exactly who He was and what authority He held (John 13:3). The apostles in Acts 6 said no to serving tables. A towel posture includes healthy boundaries and the confident use of God-given authority.

Again, a towel posture doesn't mean having no boundaries, no authority, or no voice. Jesus served from security in who He was, not from a need to be needed. Serving that leaves no room to rest, say no, or raise up others can be its own form of people-pleasing.

Title Isn't Always Pride

In many cultures, using and honouring titles is an expression of respect, not status-seeking. Leaders from those backgrounds may hear "title = worldly" as a criticism of their culture. The issue the assessment is after is leading from the title, not having one or honouring one. Again, Having a title isn't the problem, and honouring the titles of others is often a beautiful form of respect. The question is what your leadership rests on: the position, or the person Jesus is forming in you.

If Someone Discloses Something Serious

- Listen calmly, thank them for their honesty, and don't promise complete confidentiality. Confidentiality has limits when someone may be harmed or harm themselves.
- If anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services.
- If a disclosure involves abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, follow your denomination's safeguarding policy and your local legal reporting requirements. Know these before the workshop.
- If someone speaks of suicide or self-harm, stay with them and connect them to help. In Canada they can call or text 988.
- Have names of trusted Christian counsellors and pastoral care contacts ready to share.
- Afterward, debrief with the workshop leaders rather than carrying it alone.