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LEADERSHIP CLARITY QUESTIONS TO STOP FIREFIGHTING AND LEAD WITH CONFIDENCE *Without Working Harder*

**A Short Guide for Christian Executives and Senior Leaders
Who Feel Pulled in Too Many Directions**

WHY I WROTE THIS GUIDE



Years ago, I stepped in to lead a large, multi-department team that was mission-critical, but badly demoralised. The team did important work that enabled others in the organisation to succeed. Yet many people did not see their value. Some even looked down on them. Sadly, some members of the team had begun to look down on themselves, too. When I asked team members what they did and why they were on the team, some of their answers were heartbreaking.

They did not speak like people who saw the significance of their contribution. They sounded discouraged, disconnected, and unsure that their work mattered. I felt ill-equipped. I knew something had to change, but I also knew I could not simply give a speech, issue instructions, or tell people to be more motivated.

The work had to go deeper. Over time, we began to rally the team around a shared purpose. We developed a core leadership team. We worked on ownership. We helped team members see the value of their contribution.

We shifted towards a more coach-like way of leading: one that did not simply tell people what to do but helped them grow, take ownership, and succeed. The change did not happen overnight.

But within a year, the team became more engaged, more trusting, and more willing to take ownership. People who once felt overlooked began to speak with pride about the meaningfulness of their work. Eventually, others began asking to join the very team people once avoided.

That experience shaped how I think about leadership. Most leaders do not struggle because they lack intelligence, commitment, or strategy. They struggle because leadership is ultimately about people, and people are complex.

A leader can have a plan, but still struggle to help people own the journey. A leader can care deeply, but still become exhausted carrying too much. A leader can be capable, but still feel lonely, pressured, or unclear about what to do next. When leadership feels this way, the instinct is to reach for better time management.

This helps a little. But in my experience, the deeper issue is not time. It is clarity.

Clarity about what truly matters. Clarity about what only you should carry. Clarity about what needs to be delegated, clarified, delayed, or released. so you can lead from your strengths, values, and purpose instead of merely pushing harder.

This guide gives you a starting point: five questions that can shift how you see your leadership situation. Asking a better question is the first step towards leading with greater clarity, confidence, and purpose.



THE REAL ISSUE IS NOT TIME. IT IS CLARITY.

If you are spending your time on the wrong things, doing them more efficiently will not solve the problem. You will simply become more efficient at staying overwhelmed.

The real issue for most leaders is not poor time management. It is carrying too much without enough clarity. They are solving problems others need to learn to solve. They are delaying conversations that would bring resolution.

They are serving their team, their stakeholders, and their organisation without a clear sense of what truly requires their leadership.

Better time management asks: *How can I fit more into my schedule?*

Leadership clarity asks: *What is the most important contribution only I can make as the leader?*

That is a different question. And it leads to a different way of leading.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The five questions that follow are designed to do one thing: trigger your thinking.

They are not a checklist to complete. They are prompts to help you notice what you already know but have not had space to articulate.

Set aside 10 to 15 minutes. As you sit with each question, write down whatever surfaces. Pay attention to what feels clear, what feels heavy, and what you have been avoiding.

You do not need perfect answers. You need honest ones.

QUESTION 1

What Truly Matters Right Now?

Not everything that feels urgent is truly important. And not everything important announces itself loudly.

Operational fires demand your attention, while the strategic work you know matters keeps getting pushed to next week. A stakeholder's request feels urgent, but the team member quietly disengaging needs you more. The inbox is full, the calendar is packed, and somewhere in the noise, the things that actually deserve your best leadership attention are being crowded out.

This is where your team's purpose and mission become essential. Purpose is not a poster on the wall; it is the filter that helps you decide what truly matters. Gallup's research found that "employees with a strong sense of purpose at work are 5.6 times as likely to be engaged" as those without it.¹ That finding applies to you as a leader, too. When you are clear on the purpose and mission your team exists to fulfil, you have a north star for deciding where to direct your attention.

I have written about this at length: when team members cannot articulate how their work contributes to the team's mission, they become disengaged, make poor decisions, and lose the ability to prioritise.² The same thing happens to leaders. When your own connection to the mission becomes buried under daily demands, everything starts to feel equally urgent.



1. Source: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/697403/purposeful-work-boostsengagement-few-experience.aspx>

2. Read more: <https://rlimleadership.com/blog/blog-english/help-team-membersconnect-their-work-to-the-mission/>

SIT WITH THIS QUESTION:

If I could only give my best leadership attention to one or two things right now, what would they be?

TO HELP YOU THINK FURTHER:

Which of these directly serves my team's purpose and mission?

What issue, if left unaddressed, will create bigger problems later?

Leadership begins to feel clearer when you can name what truly matters.

REFLECTION

The one or two things that most need my leadership attention right now are:

1.

2.

QUESTION 2

What Is Mine to Carry?

There are decisions, conversations, priorities, and burdens that cannot simply be handed away. That is the nature of leadership.

But not everything that lands on your desk is yours to carry. Leaders become overwhelmed not because they lack capacity, but because they absorb responsibility for things that belong elsewhere: other people's decisions, other people's growth, problems the team should learn to solve, and expectations that were never clarified.

This comes from good intentions. You want to be helpful. You want to protect the team. You want to prevent mistakes. But over time, carrying what is not yours makes you tired, and it prevents others from growing.

Here is a useful filter: the responsibilities that truly belong to you are those that require your unique leadership strengths, judgement, or positional authority. Everything else is worth examining. If someone else on your team could grow by carrying it, it probably does not belong with you.

What truly requires my leadership, judgment, presence, or decision?

What am I carrying simply because I have always carried it?

Not everything needs to be released. Some things really are yours to carry. Clarity begins when you can tell the difference.

REFLECTION

The responsibilities that truly require my leadership right now are:

1.

2.

3.

The responsibilities I need to reconsider carrying are:

1.

2.

3.



QUESTION 3

What Am I Carrying That Someone Else Needs to Own?

One of the most common leadership traps is this:



it feels faster to do it myself.

In the short term, it usually is faster. But if you always carry what others need to learn to carry, your team remains dependent on you, and you remain exhausted.

I see this pattern frequently in my coaching work. A leader I worked with realised he was making decisions his team leads were capable of making, not because they lacked ability, but because he had never clarified that those decisions were theirs to make. Once he did, two things happened: his team leads grew noticeably in confidence, and he found himself with the space to focus on the strategic work only he could do.

The answer is not careless delegation. The answer is intentional development.

Every team member has strengths that, given the opportunity, could carry more of the weight you are currently shouldering. The question is whether you are creating the conditions for that to happen.

What decision am I making that someone else could learn to make?

What would it look like to invest in that person's growth instead of continuing to carry the load myself?

When others begin to own what they should carry, you are not abandoning them. You are helping them grow.

REFLECTION

One thing I am carrying that someone else needs to own is:

One person I need to develop, empower, or clarify expectations with is:

QUESTION 4

What Conversation Have I Been Avoiding?

If you have been leading for any length of time, you already know the answer to this question.

There is a conversation you have been putting off. It might be about unclear expectations, underperformance, a conflict that has been simmering, or a misalignment you have been hoping would resolve itself. You have thought about it more than once. You have rehearsed parts of it in your head. And you have found reasons to delay it.

The reasons feel valid: you do not want to discourage someone. You do not want to create tension. You are unsure how to speak with both honesty and grace. So you wait.

But delayed conversations do not get easier. They get heavier. The issue grows. The relationship strains. And the energy you spend managing around the conversation is energy you are not spending on the leadership work that matters.

What conversation, if handled wisely, could bring greater clarity or health to my leadership situation?

What is the cost of continuing to avoid it?

A difficult conversation handled with humility, courage, and care is a turning point, not only for the issue itself but for the relationship and the team. You do not need to rush into it tomorrow. But naming it is the first step.

REFLECTION

The conversation I have been avoiding is:

The reason I have been avoiding it is:

QUESTION 5

What Is the Next Faithful Step?

Leadership clarity does not mean you can see the entire path. You do not need to. You need enough clarity to take the next step.

Not every issue will be solved this month. Not every person will change quickly. Not every decision will feel certain. But when you can identify the next faithful step, you move from reacting to leading.

The word ***“faithful”*** matters here. Faithfulness does not require certainty. It requires the willingness to act on the clarity you have, trusting that God is at work in what you cannot yet see. Whether you draw on faith, conviction, or simply a commitment to lead with integrity, the principle is the same: you do not need the whole map. You need the next step and the courage to take it.

As you look back over your reflections from the previous four questions, ask:

What is one step I can take this week?

What support do I need in order to move forward wisely?

Small steps, taken with clarity and consistency, create meaningful progress over time.

REFLECTION

The next faithful step I can take this week is:

The support, courage, or clarity I need is:

Your Leadership Clarity Snapshot

Take a moment to summarise what you noticed across the five questions.
Return to this page over the next few days and refine your answers as your thinking develops.

What truly matters right now?

What is mine to carry?

What am I carrying that someone else needs to own?

What conversation have I been avoiding?

What is my next faithful step?

If you schedule a Clarity Conversation (see below), you are welcome to bring this snapshot. It will give us a useful starting point.

This Guide Helped You See. Coaching Helps You Move.

These five questions can surface what is true about your leadership situation. But seeing clearly and acting wisely are different things. The gap between knowing what needs to change and actually changing it is where most leaders stay stuck, sometimes for months or years.

That gap is where coaching makes the difference.

The **Lead with Clarity Coaching Partnership** is a six-month private coaching engagement for Christian executives and senior leaders who want to stop firefighting and start leading with clarity, confidence, and purpose.

Over six months, you will work through the real leadership challenges on your plate: the decisions, the conversations, the team dynamics, the priorities that feel tangled. You will lead from your strengths instead of just pushing through your weeks.

I have spent more than 20 years coaching leaders across the world. I hold the ICF PCC (International Coaching Federation Professional Certified Coach) and EMCC Senior Practitioner credentials, and I am a Gallup-Certified Strengths Coach. I share this not to list credentials, but because when you are investing in a coaching partnership of this depth, you deserve to know that your coach has the training, experience, and accreditation to meet you where you are.



Richard never told me what I should do. Yet, repeatedly, he helped me see what I care about. His questions were often thought-provoking and powerful, illuminating the unspoken struggles and contradictions behind my words. Sometimes, a single statement from him created more insights than a week of thinking on my own.

**Monique Hsu, Director, Human Resources
and Financial Management Division**

THE FIRST STEP

A Clarity Conversation

A Clarity Conversation is a 30-minute, no-obligation conversation where we explore what you are carrying as a leader, what feels unclear or heavy right now, and whether coaching would be a helpful next step.

If you completed the Leadership Clarity Snapshot above, bring it along. If it is a good fit, we will discuss what working together looks like. If it is not, you will still walk away with greater clarity about your situation. There is no obligation to continue after the conversation.

SCHEDULE A CLARITY CONVERSATION

OR VISIT ➤ calendly.com/rlimleadership/clarity-conversation

A FINAL THOUGHT

Imagine leading with a clearer sense of what matters most. Imagine no longer feeling responsible for carrying everything yourself. Imagine having the confidence to make decisions, have difficult conversations, and guide your team without constantly reacting to the urgent.

Leadership will still be demanding. There will still be responsibilities, pressures, and complex situations. But it does not have to feel like constant firefighting. You can lead with greater clarity, confidence, and purpose, one faithful step at a time.

Helping you multiply your impact,

Richard

Richard Lim, PCC

Executive Coach | Team Coach
Coach Trainer | Mentor Coach
Gallup Certified Strengths Coach
Certified StandOut Strengths Coach