



## **Course Name: Transformational Leadership - Leader-Member Exchange Theory**

By Chuck Ramseur

---

### **Course description:**

This course explores the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers. In this class we will examine the Leader-Member Exchange Theory towards understanding how our roles change throughout interaction.

**Course Objectives:** At the end of this class we will have:

- A. Examined Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX).
- B. Explored the idea of high-quality and low-quality social exchanges and their benefits.
- C. Determined whether high and low-quality social exchanges are ethical.
- D. Investigated avenues to ward against some of the pitfalls inherent in LMX.  
Definition: dyad – the individualized relationship between a leader and each follower in a work unit.

### **Outline of the class:**

- A. Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) explains the role-making process that occurs between leaders and individual followers as it occurs over the course of time. We can all speak to being part of a group and feeling like we are at the center of it and growing closer. We can also probably speak to being a part of a group, but feeling like we are drifting away from the center. Ask for times when people were a part of a group. Were they close to the leader and those who were major contributors or were they on the outskirts with those who just played their roles?
- B. What we are discussing when we are at the center of the group and moving along with the leader are high-quality social exchanges. This is also known as being a part of the in-group.
  - 1. High-quality social exchanges exist when there are positive feelings and trust between the leader and followers.
  - 2. These relationships extend beyond the formal employment or movement.
    - a. Ex 24:1-2, 12-15 – Moses enjoyed a relationship with God that no one else experienced.

- b. Mt 11:1, 13:1-1 – Jesus gave special instructions to the twelve.
    - c. Mt 17:1-13 – Jesus allowed specific disciples to have special knowledge and a closer relationship.
  - 3. High-quality social exchanges build confidence to interact with the leader and for the leader to develop appropriate behavior in his or her followers.
    - a. Mt 13:36 – The disciples announce confusion and seek clarification.
    - b. Lk 11:1 – The disciples want to know how to pray properly, as He prayed.
    - c. Luke 9:54-56 – Jesus has an opportunity to correct behavior and reestablish their purpose.
- C. Low-quality social exchanges are also known as being in the out-group. Negative feelings, apathy, or low connectivity cause relationships to remain at the surface level or to deteriorate completely.
  - 1. Acts 15:37-41 – Mark and Paul’s relationship suffered due to negative feelings because Mark abandoned them on a previous journey.
  - 2. Mt 25:14-30 – The Parable of the Talents teaches relationships break down when followers view their leaders as difficult.
- D. Ask the class to discuss whether it is ethical to exclude people from the in-group or high-quality social exchanges?
  - 1. Make a list on the board of reasons people would be excluded from the in-group? Suggestions may include:
    - a. What are the needs of the moment?
    - b. Certain spiritual types mesh well.
    - c. Workers rise to the top.
    - d. These are the courageous.
    - e. They are leaders in training.
  - 2. Do people in the in-group tend to think exclusion is ethical and those in the out-group tend think it is unethical? Discuss.
- E. Avoiding the pitfalls of distrust in dyadic relationships is essential to building healthy relationships between leaders and the church. Read through 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 and point out ways leadership and the church can help one another avoid the unethical pitfalls. It may help to point out that 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 addresses the church and 5:14-22 addresses the leadership. Suggestions may include:
  - 1. We don’t create separation among ourselves.

2. We all appreciate the leadership equally.
3. The leadership looks out for the weak and the strong.
4. The leadership seeks the good for all.
5. The leadership stays in prayer.

Conclusion:

- A. Today, we have discussed Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). It is important to remember the exchange portion of our relationships. Exchanges change the way we think about one another as the relationship grows through time.
- B. Relationships can dwindle due to proximity or they can fade due to too much space. We should seek to build high-quality exchanges through positive exchanges. Where there is weakness in relationship, we should strengthen it by reexamining our positions using passages like 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22.
- C. It is inevitable that some relationships will be stronger than others, but it does not mean that we should be content with broken relationships.
- D. This week, we need to look at the relationships in our inner-circle. Decide which ones are strong enough for us to give more time to the weaker ones.
- E. If we can examine our relationships honestly, and repair what may soon be broken, then we can create a stronger church, family, and world.