

THE SECRET OF LEADERSHIP

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PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

INTRODUCTION

What really is the secret of leadership? Most people want to have some position of leadership. It brings certain privileges. It gives certain satisfactions. It enables you a feeling of more fruitfulness. So many people try to become some kind of leader. Let me list for you five things that leadership is not.

I. FIVE THINGS THAT LEADERSHIP IS NOT

It is not....

A. Stature

King Saul was the tallest person in Israel. That did not make him a good leader. David's brothers were good looking men. Every young girl would have wanted to marry a real man like that! God said, "Not them."



B. Looks

That is what Samuel thought. "Oh, look at him. Surely he is the one God has chosen." God says, "*God does not judge by external appearance*" (Galatians 2:6). "*The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*" (1 Samuel 16:7). If he is young. If he is tall. If he has curly hair, no glasses, maybe he would be a good leader. That is not the measurement. Jesus said to the crowds, "*Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.*" (John 7:24).

C. I.Q.

So many times there is a very smart person in a group and the group selects him to be the leader. I have seen it happen in church leadership selections. As I was teaching the Bible courses, they kept saying, “.. but he is the perfect person for that.” It was true. He was more intelligent and knew things better than the other students did, but he did not have the gifts to become a leader.



D. Personality

You have these talk shows on TV and they spin a wheel and they have these people who are so very special, so beautiful. They know how to shake a hand. They know how to lift a lady's hand and kiss it. They know when to smile and to have lots of jokes. You just enjoy yourself with these people. They are so friendly, so comfortable. That is not the secret for leadership.

E. Skill

He can do this. He can do that. He is intelligent. He has done this before. All of these things, still do not qualify that person to be a leader.



II. WHAT LEADERSHIP IS

Let me tell you what leadership is. ***It is an attitude of heart.*** That attitude is meekness. We find it in Matthew 16:24, “*Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’*” ***It is denying yourself.*** Not thinking, “Can I afford it?” Not thinking, “Will I get a good salary?” Not thinking, “Will the provincial superintendent say thank you to me?” But simply going out into the world and doing something for Jesus.

It is meekness versus selfish pride. It is losing your life for the sake of Jesus. I could stay in America, have better clothes, a car, and have an easier life. I did not come to this part of the world to get these nice things, these special things. But when I came, I found people like Viatcheslav, Igor, Pavel, Benjamin, and many others. I am so glad I came. It is the highlight of my life to be here, and to meet these people, to know them and to work with them, and to see beautiful things happening for the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. GREATNESS BEGINS WITH SERVITUDE

Philippians 2:5, “*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus*”. Your attitude should be the same as the attitude Jesus had. What was that attitude? “*Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*” (Philippians 2:6-7). He did not say, “Ha, I am God. Send somebody else at Christmas.” He did not grasp that authority. He did not stand before Pilate and say, “Pilate listen, you do not know what you are talking about. You have no authority.” When he went to the cross he said, “*I lay down my life -- only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.*” (John 10:17-18).

Now look at Philippians 2:9, “*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*”. Because he was willing to take the lowest place, God raised him up. You want to be raised up? You had better take the lowest place. You had better get out of this conference, go home real quiet, put some oil on your bicycle chain and go to the next village and start teaching the Bible. I know it is cold.

When I wanted to study some years ago, I walked through the bitter cold and snow for several kilometers. In ordinary shoes, because I had no boots. In a raincoat because I had no winter coat. I started learning my lesson every week and God began to bless me. ***God must do the exalting***, or it is not a true exaltation. If God does not exalt you, it is not true greatness.



Leadership is a by-product. The way to lead, is the way to serve. When Yaroslav came to Kyiv, for the first three months we had our meeting at five o'clock in the morning in the New Life office. Most of you did not know if it was morning, night or what. It was dark and you had your eyes closed. But Yaroslav was there serving me and God raised him up to be the first director of New Life for Churches in Ukraine.

None of God's leaders chose to be leaders. Moses did not choose to be a leader. David did not choose to be King. Peter did not choose to be an apostle.

None of God's leaders choose to be leaders.

If you cannot serve those over you, you also cannot serve those under you. You must not only learn to take instructions, but to please the one above you. Once you have learned to please those above you, to do something extra for them, to make something really happen for them, you are beginning to come into the ball park, to minister to those below you.

IV. GREATNESS IS FOUND IN OBEYING ORDERS

Greatness is developed while you are serving. While you are serving, God will bless you. You will do one thing well, you will do another thing successfully. God does not call people who are sitting in their chairs saying "I wish God would call me, I would really like to do something for Jesus, I wonder what he would want me to do?" Gideon was busy in the wine press. Moses was feeding the sheep. Joseph was in prison, "I am not going to do anything here; I will never get out of here anyway." That is not what we read about Joseph!

While Joseph was in prison, he volunteered his services and never got paid for it. He went to the prison leader and asked, "Is there anything you need help with?" And the prison leader would say, "Yes the floor needs to be washed." Joseph, "Ok, I will do that." So the prison leader unhooked one chain and unhooked the other chain. Two chains already unlocked. He could already move about, instead of sitting in his cell. He already had freedom. Freedom to mop the floor, but it was better than sitting in his cell. God began to exalt him, when he started serving. Peter and his brother were working in their boats and Jesus said to them, "Come to me."



So, greatness is developed by serving. You must begin by leading a group, taking care of a small group of people. That is the beginning of Christian service. When I was fifteen years old, I started out by teaching a Sunday School class. That is how it will be in your life. If you are doing a good job serving that group, God will give you new opportunities. In God's good time you will become the leader God wants you to be.

V. MEEKNESS CAN BE LEARNED AND PRACTICED

In Matthew 20:26, Jesus is talking about the unbelievers and how their officials liked to exercise authority over them. Matthew 20:26 says, *"Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant"*. Meekness is the antithesis to pride. When you feel pretty good about yourself and pretty successful about yourself, it is time to start doing something for someone else.

A. Attitude

The attitude for you to learn is to serve the other leaders of your church with disregard to yourself. Not asking, "Do I have to travel a little bit too far?" I am reminded of one student who had to go such a long way in his province for his lesson that he had to stay overnight. Three years later he had helped to set up the New Life Discipleship ministry in his province. He received the laying on of hands, and received a church with 350 members. Within one year he started another new church with 150 members. He started yet another church the same year with five members. He said, "This fall, Mr. Bible, if God gives me his grace, I will start two more new churches." That man has the attitude to serve people. Day and night he is going, going, going to help people.



B. Apologies

So many people when they do not get something done make up all sorts of excuses for it; “Well we did not have time.” “Well I did not understand your instructions.” “It was difficult.” We make excuses. The most difficult words in the world to say are, “I am sorry. Please forgive me.” You are never going to become a leader, until you learn that vocabulary. Never! Not in God’s economy. Be frequent with apologies. Let people know that you are an ordinary, sinful person with bad habits.



C. Words



You can show meekness with words. “I want you to do that! Ok?” Or I can say, “Will you please do that?” or “You know that is really important, I hope you will take care of it.” For instance, you make a mistake, and I say, “Oh you made a mistake, again.” You see, it is only one word. When I said, “Oh you made a mistake”, it was normal. As soon as I added the word “again”, it was like a dagger.

What do you do with your wife? You come home Sunday and she has had a hard time with the kids for the three days that you were not home. She is frustrated and she burns the food, and you say, “You always do that.” Has anyone ever said that to you? Did it feel good?

We have some of these very simple phrases, some very small words, which make us ordinary people. If you want to become a leader, you have to change your vocabulary. You will never be a man of God unless you are going to change your vocabulary. You are never going to be the woman God wants you to be unless you learn new words, new expressions, and a more positive attitude towards life.

D. Your Tone of Voice

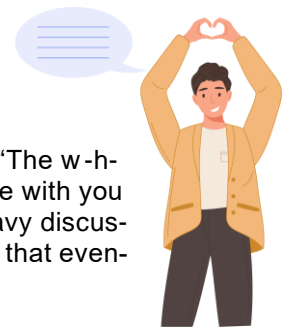
You can say something like; “You are a good wife”, but it is in the way it is said. If you are displeased with someone, you say, “You did, t-h-a-t?” or “Y-O-U, did that?” In just a little thing like that you give away your whole feelings about it.

Perhaps you are about to have a course seminar, and you say, “S-h-a-l-l we begin now?” but some of the girls are giggling and doing their hair, so you say, “Shall we begin n-o-w?” You are saying the same words, but your intonation portrays a whole different expression. The first time you simply said, “Let us begin.” The second time you said, “Well it is time to get started now!” The third time you said, “How long will you fiddle around before we can begin?”

Just imagine, last year something came up and I asked somebody, “How did it go?” and they said, “Normal.” With one word I knew what he was trying to tell me. “Did you like the course?” He said, “Not bad.” Can you see how a few words can destroy your whole relationship.

Let us say your friend wants to do something with you in the evening, and you say, “The w-h-o-l-e evening?” You have just ruined the whole evening. He does not even want to be with you anymore. It is finished. Because you did not like each other? Because you had a heavy discussion? NO! Because of three words, “The w-h-o-l-e evening?” That is all it took to ruin that evening. And it broke the relationship.

“A gentle answer turns away wrath.” (Proverbs 15:1).



E. Actions and Gestures

For instance you tell me something and I make a negative or rather unpleasant facial expression, or if you are trying to explain something You tell me you had a little problem in your group and my eyebrows rise up and my mouth drops open, and without actually saying the words, “No! Oh, really? Is that so? I am shocked!” You know immediately, “Oh Mr. Bible did not expect that. I better shut up. I had better be quiet. He was expecting me to say nice things to him. Next time I had better say nice things.”



You have a group of people that you are teaching and one of the girls comes to you and says, “I want to tell you something and I want you to pray with me. Something happened. Last week I slept with a boy.” Immediately your face shows shock or horror. You do not need to pray anymore. It is gone out the window.

You must control your own emotions and not act shocked. Only then can you put your arm around her and say, “Thank you that you put your confidence in me, you have really honored me today. You know what, I have had a lot of sin in my life too, maybe not the same thing, but I would be glad to pray with you.” The Bible says, “*Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.*” (1 Peter 4:8).

That girl came to you because she trusted you. She could not tell her mother or her father. She could not tell her pastor. She came to you! It is a great honor and a great privilege. If you handle it in a humble way, you can become her leader and her spiritual hero.

CONCLUSION

Insights:

- * *You stumble over greatness on the path of servitude.*
- * *He who sweeps the palace will some day rule it.*

I trust you understand the secret of leadership. I trust you will go out and seek it. Meekness can be learned. Leadership begins with serving. ***You will find greatness in obeying.*** Become a servant leader. Let us aim for that. Say “amen” if that is in your heart. Praise God for the opportunity.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by New Life for Churches. You have the privilege upon completion of your practical assignment to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

- Make a plan to put servant leadership into practice. Bring a written copy of the plan along with a progress report to the next conference.

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