

THE PERILS OF LEADERSHIP

Text: Hebrews 13:17

Key Word: Leadership

Key Thought: God's Leadership Needs to be on Guard Against the Constant Perils

*** The top headline on Tuesday, Feb 6, 1990 was the 1 hour address of Michail Gorbachev, the party chief and president of the Soviet Union. In his speech he asked the Communist Party to abandon its monopoly on power.

It is time he said to renounce "ideological dogmatism that has taken root over the decades, stereotypes in internal policy that have outlived themselves and outdated views of the world revolutionary process."

Although he did not call outright for the abolition of Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution (which established the party as the leading role and only leadership), he clearly implied that it was outmoded in their current circumstances.

The 20 million member party had been the sole ruler of the Soviet Union since 1917, the year of the Bolshevik Revolution. His statements were recognized as an abandonment of Marxist traditions. Gorbachev urged the Central Committee to cast off "*decades of political dogma.*" ***

*** President F.W. deKlerk also made a surprising speech during the same week. He legalized the African National Congress and promised to free their imprisoned leader, Nelson Mandela.

The president also offered to share a measure of power with the nation's black majority. The president faced strong opposition the right wing of his party. DeKlerk intended to appeal some of the laws mandating rigid racial segregation known as Apartheid. Conservative legislators described the mood of the white electorate as "ugly" and "potentially violent." ***

Last year the main news story nearly every day surrounded leadership. None of us will forget the names Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Barrack Obama, Justin Trudeau, Vladimir Putin, Bashar al-Assad, Pope Francis, David Cameron, Angela Merkel and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi the leader of ISIS.

The Church is not exempt from these kind of leadership problems. Yet the myth that 1,700 Christian leaders are leaving their hopeless situations is just that - a myth. It was based upon this quote from Dr. James Dobson in 1998.

“We estimate that approximately 1,500 pastors leave their assignments each month, due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or contention within their local congregations.”

Dr. James Dobson
“Family News”

Leaving an assignment is much different than leaving the ministry forever. The fact is that most pastors love what they do.

Here’s what I love about being a pastor.

1. Pastors spend every day on what matters most.
2. Pastors get to do just about everything.
3. We see people at their best.
4. Pastors get paid to think, write, and speak.
5. We help people.
6. Pastors have freedom.
7. We answer to a higher authority.

Lawrence W. Wilson

Here is a list of the 10 most stressful jobs in Canada. None relate to the church.

1. Oil Rig worker - 74
2. Doctor - 70
3. Pilot - 68
4. Journalist -65
5. Firefighter - 62
6. Long-Haul Truck Driver - 62
7. Courier - 61
8. Surgeon - 53
9. Field Sales Executive - 49
10. Nurse - 48

This does not mean being a church leader is without stress or problems. It’s just different how we approach problems. Where must Church Leadership continue to be diligent to exceed in our world of stress?

I. THEIR DIRECTION
II. THEIR DEDICATION
III. THEIR DISCIPLINE

I. THEIR DIRECTION

There is a bumper sticker that reads,

"Don't follow me, I'm lost too!"

Motion does not always mean progress. The excitement of movement is very appealing in our society. Do something! they tell us. We must always remember that God not only guided the nation of Israel's **starts** but He also determined their **stops**.

A. Starts

"By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or by night.

22. Neither the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people."

Exodus 13:21,22

God had Moses lead the children of Israel to the Red Sea. So the sea was before them. A determined Egyptian army was behind them. These 600,000 men as well as women and children (Exodus 12:37) appeared to be trapped.

The angel of God moved the pillar between Israel and the approaching Egyptian army. During the night the Egyptians saw only the dark cloud. The Israelites, on the other hand, witnessed the pillar of God's fire (Exodus 14:20). During the night the LORD drove back the sea with a strong east wind and dried up the land. **The path of deliverance** for God's people as well as the **path of destruction** for their enemies was formed.

B. Stops

Not only did the people **wander** in the wilderness, they also **camped**. When the pillar stopped, the people also stopped and built camp. As soon as the tabernacle was built the pillar of cloud or fire stayed over it.

I. THEIR DIRECTION (Contd.)

B. Stops (Contd.)

*"In all the travels of the Israelites, Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out;
37. but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out - until the day it lifted."*

Exodus 40:36,37

God therefore directed their stops. Often these stops came in dry, barren areas. God also led them into hostile territories. The people began to question Moses' leadership. Did he really know where he was going? The people had no problem questioning Moses' leadership even with God's glory visible before them. **Strange things can happen when God stops us.**

II. THEIR DEDICATION

The signs of burnt-out leadership are all around us. Since most people are unaware of all the extra demands placed upon leadership, they can easily begin to question one's dedication.

There is no doubt that some have fallen into disgrace. But we need to be careful about judging present leadership by the actions of their peers. Each must be judged on his own merit ... and that judgement must be done with great caution!!!

The Bible has a lot to say about the dedication of Moses at a time when he was being questioned by those he served. Exodus 18 tells us about a visit to Moses by Jethro (his father-in-law). It began with the usual greetings and the sharing of good and bad news.

Moses soon returned to "business as usual." He served as the judge (among many other things) for his people. He worked from morning to night. He was constantly bombarded with disputes among the people. Jethro evaluated the situation and said,

"What you are doing is not good."

Exodus 18:17

"I'd rather get ten men to do the job than to do the job of ten men."

D. L. Moody

II. THEIR DEDICATION (Contd.)

Moses's work load was not good for himself, his wife or his children. The people seemed to be unaware of the stress that Moses was under. I'm sure that Jochebed spoke to dad about her work-a-holic husband.

The advice that Jethro gave was simple and to the point. Train trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain (can't be bought) and ...

1. Train them in God's Word (*Exodus 18:20*)
2. Teach them to be examples (*Exodus 18:21a*)
3. Transfer duties to them (*Exodus 18:21b,22*)

Moses was to deal only with the difficult cases and by doing so his work load was greatly reduced. This does not mean that Moses became slack with his time. It actually gave him the necessary time to spend with God on vital items to lead the nation during their pilgrimage.

This change gave him 40 days to spend time with God on Mount Sinai (chapter 19) to hear the heartbeat of God. It took this time to receive the pattern to build the tabernacle; to receive the 10 commandments, and to glory in God's presence.

III. THEIR DISCIPLINE

A leader is recognized by his/her ability to be disciplined. They often work when others are at play. They pray when others work. An undisciplined leader is about as useful as a fish that can't swim. **Discipline is birthed in the furnace of despair** and therefore few set their desire after it.

A spiritual leader determines within himself what goals he must make as guided by God. Athletes place themselves under strict training programs to win medals of distinction. Students encounter high levels of stress to gain a degree. Something easily gained is not worth much. A godly leader must have a disciplined life.

It is therefore very frustrating for leadership to receive strong opposition after they have subjected themselves to such strict training. Repeated assaults against one's character will eventually weaken even the strongest individual. Often it is not **WHAT** is said but rather **HOW** it is said.

Problems are a fact of life. Our response to problems can display our level of maturity.

III. THEIR DISCIPLINE (Contd.)

The Apostle Paul consistently displayed a disciplined life. He disciplined his . . .

1. Thought life (*I Corinthians 2:16*)
2. Spirit life (*I Corinthians 2:4*)
3. Conversation (*Ephesians 4:29*)
4. Finances (*I Corinthians 9:19*)
5. Public life (*II Corinthians 1:12*)
6. Spiritual warfare (*II Corinthians 10:4-6*)
7. Prayer life (*Ephesians 1:7*)

It is strange that leaders who are really walking a fine-line on strict personal discipline are cast off as being archaic or out-of-step with the day. It is often because their lifestyle brings conviction to those who need to make adjustments in THEIR lifestyle.

I've seen major problems come into a church when someone needs to be corrected. We must always remember that when a leader's hands are tied in the area of loving discipline, the church will ultimately suffer. **Leadership needs to be very cautious in their approach to God's wayward sheep.**

Our churches need good leadership. Beware that the devil is out to destroy such men and women. Be very careful not to become involved in words and actions that come against God's appointed and anointed. Obey them out of reverence to God and submit to Godly leadership that is based upon God Word. It is their duty to watch over your soul

“Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.”

Hebrews 13:17

If not they will lose the joy of ministry and carry too great a burden. Let's beware that we don't allow the world's approach to enter our churches. Our world is taking giant steps toward the establishment of global unity. Major political leaders are under frequent attack.

If the church adopts the world's principle it will eventually lead to a dictatorship under a false prophet. The Church needs to stand in prayer behind its leadership until our Lord returns. Anything less will have serious implications. Let's not be trapped by the spirit of the day. Keep alert and have your ears opened to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

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Date: Dec 31/17

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Build Your Church - F

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Where must Church Leadership Continue to Be Diligent to Exceed in Our World of Stress?

I. THEIR DIRECTION

A. Starts - *Exodus 13:21,22; Exodus 12:37; Exodus 14:20*

B. Stops - *Exodus 40:36,37*

II. THEIR DEDICATION - *Exodus 18:17*

Train trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain (can't be bought) and ...

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