

16. Leadership

January 24, 2010

All morning, an instructor of a police academy had been explaining leadership to a class of police recruits. Almost at the end of the class, the instructor called a recruit to the front of the class, he handed him a piece of paper on which was written: "You are in charge. Get everyone out of the room fast without causing a panic."

The recruit was at a loss for words and returned to his seat.

The second man summoned tried: "Everybody outside. Go!" No one moved.

A third man glanced at the instructions, smiled and said, "All right, guys. Break for lunch." The room emptied in seconds.

That recruit understood what others needed. However, a leader is not the one who just satisfies what the followers want. That would be a wrong way to lead.

Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery, during WWII, defined "Leadership" in this way:

"Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and the character which inspires confidence."

He, then, enunciated seven ingredients necessary in a leader in war, each of which is appropriate to the spiritual warfare:

- 1) A leader should be able to sit back and avoid getting immersed in detail.
- 2) A leader must not be petty.
- 3) A leader must not be pompous.
- 4) A leader must be a good picker of men.
- 5) A leader should trust those under him, and let them get on with their job without interference.
- 6) A leader must have the power of clear decision.
- 7) A leader should inspire confidence.

Being a leader sounds nice if you are looking for some sort of self gratification or respect from others. But in truth, there are far more responsibilities than fun parts that many people seek after.

This morning we are going to look at several aspects of leadership from the Book of Proverbs.

A. WHAT THE LEADER MUST HAVE

1) The calling

There are some people who are natural born leaders and there are many wannabes. At the same time, there are people who absolutely don't care to be leaders. They are totally happy being followers.

You may say, "I am not a leader." Yes, you are leaders if you are mom or dad. Yes, you are leaders if you are a born-again Christian because you have to lead unbelievers to Christ with your lives. In other words, we all are called to be leaders one shape of form or another.

The majority of people in the world get married and have children or become foster parents or adopted parents. Recently My wife Karen and I became hosting parents to

Uros from Serbia and Becky from Germany. They are fun, bright young people and we are enjoying having them at our home, though Uros eats off my refrigerator.

You as born-again Christian parents have a privilege and obligation to introduce your children to our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. As I have said it before, your children hear the tone of your voice as well as terms of your words. They read your looks as well as their books. They figure out motives, even those you think you can hide. They are not fooled, not in the long haul.

Here is the art of leadership. I have a cord in my hand. If I pull it and it will follow wherever I wish. But if I push it and it will go nowhere at all. It's just that way when it comes to leading people. They need to follow a person who is leading by example.

At your work place, you are the only Bible for the unbelievers of your company would read. They may not say anything about the way you carry yourself at work, but they will notice how you handle yourself in times of difficulties. That goes the same with your family members and relatives. Your actions speak in volume far louder and better than what you can say about your faith in words.

2) Integrity

Proverbs 16:10-15 Divination is on the lips of the king (The king speaks with divine wisdom – NLT); His mouth must not transgress in judgment. 11 Honest weights and scales are the Lord's; All the weights in the bag are His work. 12 It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, For a throne is established by righteousness. 13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And they love him who speaks what is right. 14 As messengers of death is the king's wrath, But a wise man will appease it. 15 In the light of the king's face is life, And his favor is like a cloud of the latter rain.

I must tell you that I have been troubled regarding the things in our country and within the family of God. My major concern has had to do with one word, one concept – integrity.

In our nation – and in the church – there has been a falling away, a breakdown, and a compromise in integrity. Recent headlines have taught us that the boom of the Year 2000-2005 housing market was built on a foundation devoid of integrity. But compromise isn't limited to CEOs or to pork-happy politicians. All too often we find a moral laxity behind our pews and, even worse, behind the pulpit. Most unfortunately lack of integrity has penetrated deeply into the body of Jesus Christ as well.

Let me define what I mean by integrity. Webster's tells us integrity means "an unimpaired condition." It means to 'be sound'. The Hebrew word for 'integrity', "tom", also means to 'be complete or solid'.

Psalm 78:72 So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.

It is never enough to be efficient, capable, or talented. A leader must have character, first and foremost. We must maintain our integrity if we are to lead successfully.

Integrity means the absence of duplicity and is the opposite of hypocrisy. If you are a person of integrity, you will do what you say. What you declare, you will do your best to be whether others watch or not.

If your followers – whether they are your employees, coworkers or family members, don't know how truthful you are, they are not going to follow your commands or advices. Their obedience is nothing more than merely going along with you.

3) Love

John 10:11-14 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

A leader must deeply care and love his or her people. If a leader doesn't care about his followers, it will be revealed to them one way or another. A family or group that lacks loyalty to one another is like a pile of wet sand. As soon as a wind blows it starts to fall apart.

Proverbs 20:28 Mercy and truth preserve the king, And by lovingkindness he upholds his throne.

Please note this important point. It is absolutely impossible to be loved by every member of your followers – whether they are your employees, co-workers, family members, as I have said before. You will always find someone who has a beef with you. Remember that you are the leader. Lead them with love. But if they choose not to follow your leadership, it is NOT your fault. But you still need to treat them with love, as the Lord Jesus loved us while we still were sinners.

4) Wisdom and righteousness

Proverbs 28:16 A ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor, But he who hates covetousness will prolong his days.

A leader without wisdom is anything but good. Without wisdom, a leader cannot be righteous.

Proverbs 11:10-11 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; And when the wicked perish, there is jubilation. 11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

Proverbs 14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.

Proverbs 16:12 It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, For a throne is established by righteousness.

Leaders should have a goal. It is important, but it must be within the guideline of the Lord's will. Because without the Lord's guidance, one man's goal is another man's fantasy, and some other man's apathy.

5) Impartiality

Proverbs 24:23-25 These things also belong to the wise: It is not good to show partiality in judgment. 24 He who says to the wicked, "You are righteous," Him the people will curse; Nations will abhor him. 25 But those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, And a good blessing will come upon them.

Proverbs 29:14 The king who judges the poor with truth, His throne will be established forever.

When a leader does not have wisdom, he would become unrighteous and he would be partial to whomever he gets the most benefits from.

This can be especially damaging in family dynamics. How many family relationships have been ruined because mom and dad were partial to one of their children? We even find examples in the Bible as well, like Jacob and Esau.

B. WHAT THE LEADER MUST NOT HAVE

1) Covetousness / Greed

Without the Holy Spirit's restrain, all of us would have constant dissatisfaction in our hearts because of our natural covetousness and greed.

1 Timothy 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

Unless we control our covetousness and greed, it is like pouring water into a bottomless pot. When a leader is discontent, no one can have peace. Contentment is resting in the Lord and thanking Him for all things.

2) Compromise

Proverbs 25:26 If the godly compromise with the wicked, it is like polluting a fountain or muddying a spring.

Living for both worlds – the life of compromise – is a dangerous thing. Just take a look at the life of Lot, the classic compromiser. Granted, he was a believer, but he made numerous mistakes.

Lot lived in the wicked city of Sodom and eventually became a leader in the city. But he was so bound up in sin that when he went to tell his sons-in-law that the judgment of God was coming, they laughed and thought he was joking. There was no power in his witness, because he lived a compromised life.

Is that happening to you? Are you getting weaker and weaker spiritually? Do the things that once made you blush no longer shock you? Do you find yourself becoming more and more tolerant of that which is evil and less interested in that which is spiritual? Do you find that your words seem to have no effect on the unbelievers you share them with?

Such is the peril of the compromiser. They don't pull others up. Others pull them down.

Nowadays, it happens more and more in the body of Jesus Christ, the church. In attempts to cross over to unbelievers, many pastors and Bible teachers leave the cross of Jesus behind. If we mix the Gospel with the world, it is like mixing ice cream with fertilizer. It does not hurt the fertilizer, but it sure ruins the ice cream.

C. APPLICATIONS

1) Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

2) Imitate our Servant Leader Jesus.

3) Being a leader comes with more responsibilities than privileges.