

“Some Characteristics Of Great Leaders”

**A Christian Leadership Seminar
To Equip Serious Saints For Service!**



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II Timothy 2:1-2- “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

Introduction

There are many leaders in the world today. Some of these are good, and some are very good. Others are bad, and some are very bad. Someone has said that the success of any ministry or business rises and falls on the kind of leadership that ministry or business has. This is so true! Yet, it is worthy of mentioning that every person is not to be a leader, because some people are to be followers. However, in some form everyone is a leader in the sphere of his or her influence. And, actually, leadership can be defined as influence on other individuals. Thus, we come to this seminar today well aware of the fact that when it comes to Christian ministries, it is absolutely mandatory that we have good leaders. And, in spite of the fact that some people will never be out in the forefront of others, someone is always watching the examples that we set as believers in Christ, and ministers in particular. Someone has called this example before us as our modeling what we want others to become. Therefore, we must stop and determine just what kind of example and model we are setting for others. The spiritual success and fruitfulness in the lives of others, may very well be determined by the example we set for them presently. Based upon this thought, each of us should stop to evaluate our present leadership example and skills to determine if we are having a positive effect, or if by a bad example, are we having a negative effect.

This GIML seminar is being conducted this week to help all of us to evaluate our present leadership effectiveness, and also to learn some new principles that will help us to become greater leaders in our sphere of Christian service. We are not here just to waste our time, but we are here to learn, to inspire, to encourage, and to provide fellowship so that each of us will go away from this seminar better equipped to serve Jesus as greater leaders of our families, our churches, our communities, and also, in our ministries.

It goes without saying that there are many teachers in the world today who are teaching about becoming better leaders. One of the most prominent in America is Dr. John Maxwell. He is probably one of the most respected and sought after instructors on leadership that has ever lived. John uses many secular and psychological principles to teach leadership in churches and businesses across America and throughout the world. And, many times he uses biblical principles because he used to be a pastor. However, in our study for this seminar, we are going to use just biblical principles and truths so that we can understand that the Bible is a practical book for living, as well as for providing the way of salvation, building churches, raising our families, handling our money, and many other things. Therefore, we will use some biblical principles that must be incorporated into our daily lives if we are going to be great leaders. I encourage all of you to spend a lot of time reading and studying every principle and the scriptures from which they came which we will be sharing with you during our study. You must be willing to study these principles, apply them to your lives and situations, and then, you will be on your way to becoming greater leaders.

I do want to tell you that there is just no way that we could cover in our limited time together all of the leadership principles which we glean from the Bible. Some of you have been in my seminars before, and even some of you studied with me the 25 leadership principles from the Book of Nehemiah in a previous seminar. Yet, my goal for this seminar is for us to glean some very practical and specific principles that we can start working on, even today, in order to become greater leaders. The benefit from this seminar is a 50/50 proposition. It is 50% my responsibility to share with you the things that God has given to me from the Bible and my years of experience. It is your 50% responsibility to pay attention, do your study, and retain or keep what I have worked so hard to give you. Utilizing the materials in this seminar is your responsibility, and the success of your leadership wherever you may serve or minister is going to be dependent upon how much you practice what we shall cover in these short hours together. Therefore, let's get started and see what God is going to do for us as we give Him our best to become the greatest leaders that we possibly can. So, wake up, get focused, and let's move forward in becoming great leaders. The world is still begging for great leaders, and so are our churches and ministries. Let's give God our best so that our time is not wasted. The Kingdom of God demands our very best! Let's not disappoint Him with a less than our best effort!

Session 1

“A Great Leader Must Live A Life Of Integrity”

Scripture: Psalm 26:1-12

Introduction

In John Maxwell's book, "Becoming A Person Of Influence," pages 15-33, the author says many things about integrity. Let me mention several of these things as a means of introduction to our Bible study in this chapter. He says, "The need for integrity today is perhaps as great as it has ever been. And it is absolutely essential for anyone who desires to become a person of influence." Later in this chapter, Maxwell says that integrity is not determined by circumstances, integrity is not based upon credentials, and integrity is not to be confused with reputation. In giving a stronger difference between integrity and reputation, Maxwell quotes William Hersey Davis when he says:

"The circumstances amid which you live determine your reputation.....
the truth you believe determines your character...
Reputation is what you are supposed to be;
character is what you are....
Reputation is the photograph....
character is the face....
Reputation comes over one from without;
character grows up from within....
Reputation is what you have when you come to a new community....
character is what you have when you go away.
Your reputation is made in a moment;
your character is built in a lifetime...
Your reputation is learned in an hour....
your character does not come to light for a year....
Reputation grows like a mushroom;
character lasts like eternity....
Reputation makes you rich or makes you poor;
character makes you happy or makes you miserable...
Reputation is what men say about you on your tombstone;
character is what the angels say about you before the throne of God.

Folks, this is a profound paragraph about character! It should cause each of us to stop and take inventory of our character and integrity at this very moment. Maxwell included in this first chapter of his book some questions that we need to ponder if we are going to genuinely measure our integrity. Let me give you these questions and see where you and I measure up in our integrity.

1. How well do I treat people from whom I can gain nothing?
2. Am I transparent with others?
3. Do I role-play based on the person or persons' I'm with?
4. Am I the same person when I'm in the spotlight as I am when I'm alone?
5. Do I quickly admit wrongdoing without being pressed to do so?

6. Do I put other people ahead of my personal agenda?
7. Do I have the unchanging standard for moral decisions, or do circumstances determine my choice?
8. Do I make difficult decisions, even when they have a personal cost attached to them?
9. When I have something to say about people, do I talk to them or about them?
10. Am I accountable to at least one other person for what I think, say, and do?

Before moving on to the scripture study for this lesson, I want to mention just a few more things from John Maxwell's book. On page 28 of his book, he says, "If you want to become someone who can positively influence other people, you need to develop the following qualities of integrity and live them out every day:

1. You must model consistency of character.
2. You must employ honest communication.
3. You must value transparency.
4. You must exemplify humility.
5. You must fulfill your promises.
6. You must embrace an attitude of service.
7. You must encourage two-way participation with the people you influence.

Now that we have taken a look at some very helpful words from John Maxwell's book, let us quickly turn to the Word of God to get the greatest truths and principles we can acquire about integrity. Our study for the remainder of this first session has to do with David and his determination to be a man of integrity in every area of his life. Let's study each individual verse and see what God is trying to show us about our own lives and personal integrity.

I. DAVID STATED THAT HIS LIFE WAS OPEN FOR INSPECTION. vs. 1-2

A. David asked for God to inspect his sincerity. v. 1a

David began a prayer to God by asking God to judge him completely because he was not ashamed or embarrassed at the way he had been living in integrity. In other words, David was a genuine man, and at that moment in his life, he had nothing to hide but felt with all of his heart that he was not a hypocrite, but was real.

This should speak to our hearts as well. Are we real, or are we phonies? Are we wearing a mask, or have we taken the facade off of our lives? Men and women of integrity have nothing to hide and welcome the inspection of God Almighty!

B. David asked for God to inspect his surety. v. 1b

In the latter part of verse one, David asked God to go ahead and inspect his confidence in God Himself. This reveals David's transparency about his heart feelings for God. There

was no doubt or lack of surety in David's life at this moment. Why? Because David had proven the faithfulness of God over and over, and now, he knew that once again as long as his heart was clean before God, he could maintain a great confidence in God and His ability to work on David's heart. In other words, David had great faith in the promises of God, and he had no doubt that God would continue to be faithful to him regardless of what he had to face in his life.

Now, I have a question for you? "Are you such a man of integrity that you have the full assurance in your heart that regardless of what comes your way, you are sure that you will handle things well because you believe you can sincerely count on God being there to help you through your time of difficulty? I trust that you can indeed trust God because He has proven His faithfulness to you in the past, and He will be there in the present!

C. David also asked for God to inspect his smell. v. 2a

This sounds rather amusing in one way, but the word reins in this verse refers to the abdominal organs such as the kidneys. The Jews of the first century felt strongly that the seat of emotions or feelings was in the abdominal organs. So, what David was saying was, "Lord, I believe that I am so clean with you and that I walk in my integrity so much that I even smell like a genuine Christian and I welcome you to inspect my smell. Beloved, do you have the fragrance of a real Christian with integrity? I trust that you do, but if today, you can't say yes to this question, right now would be the time to get things right with God so that you can sincerely glean what God has for you during this lesson from God's Word.

D. David further asked God to inspect His sensitivity. v. 2b

In the last part of this verse, David asked God to inspect carefully to see if his heart was right. In other words, David felt so good about his personal integrity and the compassion of his heart for others, that he was truly unafraid for God to search deeply into his heart to see if he had the right feelings for others. This was really saying a lot about David's authenticity when you stop to realize how many things via for the attention of a man's heart and desires. David was truly a transparent man because he was a man of honesty and real integrity. Will you join me in opening up your heart and life for our wonderful all-knowing God to search us and to see if we are genuine! If we have nothing to hide, we will gladly ask Him to turn on His radiant search light. But, if we have phoniness and hypocrisy in our lives, we will not offer ourselves gladly for His inspection. Yet, we must never forget that He is omniscient and knows everything about us any way. Brother or sister, do you have heart trouble? God knows!

**II. SECONDLY, DAVID STATED THAT HIS LIFE WAS OPERATED WITH INTEGRITY.
vs. 3-6**

Our second point in this Bible study is that since David had a life that was open for God's inspection at any moment, he also had a life that was operated day by day upon the principles of his integrity. Now, let's take a look at two of these principles that were demonstrated in David's life and learn from them so that we too can live by the same two principles.

A. A life operated with integrity will have the proper vision. v. 3a

This is a great point! David says in the first part of verse three that because of his life of integrity, he has the assurance that God only desires good for David whatever he may face. David's integrity had produced such an assurance in his life, that he was living a life magnifying the love and goodness of God. David was saying that as long as his

life was one of integrity, he could be filled with with positive thoughts which centered his attention on the blessings of God's goodness throughout each day. David knew that the guilt produced by an unclean life would result in an unclear conscience which would draw his attention to negative thoughts and negative actions. So often when we don't have a clear conscience before God, we end up focusing our thinking upon all of the negative things going on around us, and we are inclined to blame others, blame God, and make excuses for our bad thoughts and actions.

Now I stop to ask you, "What kind of vision do you have"? Are you prone to see the good blessings of God, or are you inclined to see the negative things and miss the blessings of a good and righteous God? I must confess that often times, I am very guilty of the latter!

B. A life operated with integrity will have the proper values. vs. 3b-6

Over the past few years, I have spent much of my time speaking in scores of churches trying to present the work and ministry of GIMI. During these speaking engagements, I have spent hours talking about having the proper and correct value system. I have done this because I believe that the greatest evidence of really being saved is that we will have a good and proper value system which comes to us at the moment of salvation.

Do you remember what happened to the first converts just after the day of Pentecost and shortly thereafter? The Bible tells us in the Book of Acts that just as soon as they got genuinely saved, they sold everything they had and distributed it to those who were poor and in deep need. Now bear in mind that God did not tell them to sell everything and give the money away, but just as soon as they got saved, their lives were transformed and instead of looking inward to what they could keep or hoard, they immediately began looking outward to see whom they could help. This outward vision was the result of heart transformation on the inside where their value system became just like Jesus'. Why was this true? Because Jesus' Holy Spirit came to indwell everyone of the newly saved people. His indwelling presence gave them the same standards and desires that Jesus had. So, the question is, "What kind of value system do you have?" Let's take a look at these next few verses to see if we have the same value system that David had which was the result of his life of integrity.

1. First, David had the right standard for living. v. 3b

In this part of verse three, David said that he walked and conducted his life according to the truth of God. Friends, this is a great standard to live by! Do you live by this standard? You see, a person of integrity will always stand for God's truth and will not change or vary his stand regardless of how impressive it would be to others, or what benefits changing his standards might bring to him. In other words, political correctness will never be up for consideration when a man sticks by the right standard, the truth of God's Word!

2. Secondly, David had the right posture or position. v. 4a

In the first part of verse four, we discover that David took a firm stand upon where he would be found sitting. David said that he absolutely would not be found sitting or resting in the company of vain persons. These are the people who are always chasing the winds of the world. David had made a clear commitment to making sure that he would never hang out with the unrighteous people who would tear him down. At this

time in David's life, he was not waiting for the unexpected moment of temptation to catch him off guard, but because of his determination to live a life of integrity, he had made up his mind what his response would be long before the moment of temptation came. Yet, later on in his life, David let down his guard and fell morally because he lost his resolution to remain a man of integrity and holiness. This is just a reminder for us that we must never let down our guard because times of weakness will come our way.

3. Thirdly, David had decided that his steps must be right. v. 4b

In the second half of verse four, David stated that he would not walk with those who were hypocritical and phonies. He knew that his integrity demanded that he walk in the right direction and not in the direction of the vain wind chasers. He knew what the prophet Amos stated in **Amos chapter three, verse three**, when he said, **“Can two walk together except they be agreed?”** David realized that if you are going to walk with someone, you have to be going in their direction hand in hand. And, there is just no way that a man of integrity can walk in the same way of the foolish hypocrite. The question is, “Which way are you walking?” Are you trying to live a life of integrity while walking with the wrong people. A real leader will only walk in the steps of the Son of God! If you are going in the wrong direction today, please, please, turn around and walk the path of personal integrity.

4. Fourthly, because of his integrity, David lived a life of separation. v. 5

When I say separation, I am not talking about isolation. It is impossible to live in a world of sinners without having contact with them. But Jesus said, “...in the world, but not of the world.” The bottom line was that David was so sold out to God that he did not feel comfortable hanging out with the wicked. Actually, he developed a disdain and hatred for their lifestyles. And, so it is with every genuine person of integrity. Therefore, if you are starting down the pathway of the wicked, stop! Because if you go too far, the next step is to stop and enjoy their company. Men and women of integrity don't isolate themselves from sinners, but they do separate themselves from the wicked so that they can retain their lives of integrity and their testimonies of righteousness.

I think this would be a good place for me to say emphatically that there are some today who preach and try to practice secondary separation in all of their connections with others. I personally believe that this is the epitome of arrogance, and it is the pinnacle of Phariseeism. More people are turned off to the Gospel message by Pharisees probably than any other thing. I hope you are not a Pharisee! Remember, “...in the world, but not of the world.” Separation and not isolation!

5. Lastly, because of his integrity, David made sure that his sacrificial worship was correct. v. 6

The reference that David makes in this verse pertains to a person going up to the tabernacle to worship and before they proceed to go inside, they had to wash their hands outside so that they could be clean. Of

course, this was a spiritually symbolic practice, but it reminds us that we dare not approach the altar of God for worship unless we are men and women of integrity with clean hearts and clear consciences. In other words, our integrity affects every area of lives ; our conduct, our attitudes, our daily walk, and even our worship before God. So, lives operated with integrity are lives that are genuine and sincere in every area. Now, I have a very strong question for each of you, "Is your worship negatively affected by your lack of sincerity or hypocrisy?" If so, you need to do something about this today!

III. THIRDLY, DAVID STATED THAT HIS LIFE OF INTEGRITY WAS OCCUPIED WITH WITH INSPIRATION. vs. 7-8

We have already discussed earlier in this chapter that leadership is in fact influence over other people and their lives. In verses seven and eight of this chapter, David revealed to us that he had discovered the means whereby he could have a positive influence upon other people and the way they live. This way was to live a life of complete integrity and transparency which inspired others to follow his example. Let us take a look at these two short verses and find how David affected other lives in such a positive way.

A. Others are inspired by our voices of thanksgiving. v. 7a

In the first part of verse seven, David said that he wanted to live every day of his life with a positive declaration of thanksgiving for the goodness of God. Because of his integrity, he could do this because he had a clean heart and a clear conscience. Therefore, David went about praising and thanking God for His goodness. Thus, others were influenced to follow his example and to praise the Lord as well. If David would not have walked in a life of integrity, he could not have had a positive attitude, and he would not have demonstrated a life of thanksgiving. His negativity would have reproduced negative behavior in others.

B. Others are also inspired by our voices of testimony about God. v. 7b

Have you every tried to give a positive testimony about the goodness of God when you were discouraged and feeling down? Well, I have, and it is absolutely impossible. What David learned is what we need to learn today. He learned that if he did not live his life with integrity, he would have no positive testimony for others to imitate. But, because his heart was clean and his conscience clear, he could give verbal testimony to the goodness of God to him and his people. Therefore, David maintained a good testimony and others were inspired by his example.

Let me ask you right now to look introspectively into your present life and see if you have a positive testimony for others to imitate. Are you exemplifying a life of integrity which is producing positive fruit, or are you demonstrating a life of negativity which is discouraging others around you. Believe me when I say that it is much easier to have an effective and inspirational testimony if your heart is clean and your conscience clear. Of course, these are the roots of a life of integrity!

C. Others are also inspired by our value of the tabernacle of God. v. 8a

Let me ask you a question, "How much does your church mean to you and your family?" Obviously, the tabernacle meant much to David and he was ready to tell God and others that he loved the house of God.

When I stop to ponder just how much the house of God meant to David, I can't help but think that going to the house of God would not be a pleasure if one's life is filled with sin. Why? Because every time that a sinner walks into the presence of a Holy God, he is smitten with conviction and misery over his sin. Therefore, I am very much inclined to believe that David's love for God's house reveals the sincerity of his desire to walk in integrity and righteousness. And, we too like David, should have a tremendous love for God's house if we are walking and living in integrity. No person will have to admonish us to attend the house of God if we are living a sincere and righteous life. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit will direct us to the house where God meets with His people, and the life of integrity will automatically draw one to the fellowship of the saints. So, leaders with integrity will love the house of God and the fellowship with other believers.

D. Others are inspired by our vitality about the treasure of God. v. 8b

Let me again ask you another question! "What is the greatest thing you treasure in your relationship with God?" According to this verse, David treasured the presence of God in his life and in God's house more precious than any other thing. This should be our desire as well. We, too, should treasure God's presence and His anointing more than anything else in the world. For it is when we experience His Divine presence that we feel the most at home and the most comfortable. Why? Because like a child that longs to be in the lap of it's mother, so does the child of God enjoy being close to his heavenly Father. And, He will never seem closer than when He reveals His revealed glory to us when we gather to worship Him. Men and women of integrity are people that position themselves to experience the sweet presence of Jesus Christ in their lives and in their churches. And, without integrity, the person who desires to be a leader will never have the presence, the power, and the wisdom of a Holy God. And, these are an absolute must to a great leader!

IV. LASTLY, DAVID STATED THAT HIS LIFE WAS OBJECTIFIED WITH INSULATION. vs. 9-12

As we now come to the last point in our study of this passage of scripture, we discover that David somewhat repeats himself but with a greater passion than before. David desires to walk resolutely in integrity, and he passionately begs God to keep him away from evil and those who commit evil. Once again, we need to reiterate that David was not desiring to be isolated from sinners, but he was asking God to keep him insulated from the evil ones and their effectiveness toward him. Let's take a look at these last verses in this passage and learn some valuable lessons to help us move on with our quest to walk in integrity.

A. David stated that our lives should be insulated from evil associations. v. 9

In this verse, David picks up the theme he has already mentioned and he asked God to keep him away from the influence of wicked sinners and those who would lead him to even shed blood. Later of course, we discover that David forsook his own counsel and he ended up committing adultery and even murder. If only, David would have followed his own advice, his story would have ended differently. Yet, what a lesson we have from David's prayer and desire. When will we ever learn that in order to keep lives of integrity, we must stay away from those who are evil and those who have no scruples about hurting and even killing others to get their own ways. So, let's make our object and goal to stay away from those who will have an evil influence upon us.

B. David stated that our lives should be insulated from evil manipulation. v. 10

It is obvious that the world is filled with evil men and women who desire to use us in a bad

way; some that even try to manipulate us and bribe us with money. This is so very true in Africa where there is so much corruption among leaders. David said that in order for him to retain his integrity, he must stay away from those who would use mischief and bribes to influence him to do wrong. This is a tremendous lesson for us here in Africa! Could I please ask you, **“What is your price?” “How much would it take for you to sell out to evil people?”** In a third world country where money is so scarce, it is always a serious temptation to those who have so little to sell their virtue and integrity to those who only want position, power, and influence, for the price of a little money. **Just remember that Judas Iscariot’s price was thirty pieces of silver! What is your price to sell out the Savior? What will it take to get you to lie, deceive, exaggerate the truth, embellish a story, or do some other sin for the price of a bribe?** If you can be bought, you are not a person of integrity and you are certainly not going to be a great leader! This is true here in Africa, and it is true anywhere in the world! And, even if you can keep your deception covered for a while, God will one day expose it for what it really is!

C. David next stated that our lives should be insulated from evil imitation. v. 11

This verse is a very difficult verse to interpret. Yet, I believe that what David is saying is that in a wicked world of evil all around him, he desires to walk even in a more righteous way so that he will not imitate the evil ones that he comes in contact with. He pleads with God to help him by showing him mercy to stay pure and free from evil influence. And, I personally believe this should be our prayer as well. In a world filled with wickedness, we must have the mercy and strength of God to keep our selves insulated from this terrible world. So, David is acknowledging his weakness, and so should we. We are truly nothing apart from God’s grace and mercy, but yet there is hope for us if we will depend upon Him!

D. David stated finally that our lives should be insulated from evil habitation. v. 12

We now come to the last verse in this great Psalm. David makes a firm commitment that he was going to stand in the right place with steadfastness. And, he knew that if he did this, others would be looking at him from all around. Therefore, he was determined that he would keep a testimony of integrity for others to witness. With all of his resolve, he wanted to be upright in his conduct and behavior so that he could be a good leader and influence others with a positive example. This should be our goal as well. We must make sure that in our house, in our church, and in our community that we retain and maintain a life of integrity if we are going to be great leaders. There is no room for hypocrisy and cover up in the life of a great Christian leader!

Conclusion

We now come to the end of this first session of our study. I trust that God has really dealt with your hearts about becoming people of integrity if you are going to be great leaders. There are several other principles that we are going to cover in our future lessons, but unless we make a firm commitment to integrity, there is not much reason for moving ahead with the other areas of our lives. Why? Because without integrity, we can’t conscientiously apply the other principles we will learn about in this study. Therefore, I really admonish you to stop and check out your integrity! Are you honest, genuine, and transparent? If not, why don’t you stop and work on that right now. It starts with confession and moves on to personal prayer begging God for help like David prayed! May God help us all to be leaders of integrity!

Session 2

“A Great Leader Must Live A Life Of Discipline”

Scripture: I Timothy 4:6-16

Introduction

When we hear the word discipline, many definitions might come to our minds. My first thoughts about the word discipline have to do with the way my father used to punish me when I broke the family rules. Although I didn't believe it at the time, he said that he was carrying out the discipline for my own good. I am sure that he meant well, but it surely didn't feel so well when he was applying a belt to my back side. Also, when I think about discipline, I think of the many teachers who invested years of their lives into my life by teaching and training me in the many class rooms that I sat in. Then, discipline reminds me of the many times that my mother told me no when I wanted to do things that she thought were wrong. And, sometimes when I went ahead and disobeyed her, I suffered the consequences which were not very pleasant. So, discipline means many things to different people. But, when it comes to living a disciplined life in order to be a great leader, we must approach the term discipline from a Biblical stand point or view.

The word discipline comes from the same Greek word from which we get disciple, and it means to be a learner or one that lives a life under control and restricted in order to follow another. In the New Testament sense, this refers to following Jesus. Remember that Jesus' followers were called disciples, or learners! For three and one half years Jesus spent literally hundreds and hundreds of hours training and mentoring his disciples so that they could become His leaders when once he went away to heaven. Therefore, in the context of our study in this second session, we are going to look at the word discipline from the stand point of living a life under control in order to become a good follower who in turn will develop into a good leader. Poor followers or disciples become poor leaders! Therefore, all of us are challenged with the necessity of being good disciples so that when the time comes for us to become leaders, we will be great leaders because we have been great followers!

In the passage of scripture under study in this session, we are going to study part of the epistle that Paul wrote to the young preacher named Timothy. Timothy was the young new pastor at the church of Ephesus and he was having great difficulty getting the people there to follow him. This was especially true of the older people in the church who felt that Timothy was too young to be their pastor. Therefore, Paul wrote to Timothy to explain to him what it was going to take for him to earn the respect of the people. Please notice that I said, earn the respect, and not demand the respect. Genuine respect must be earned and not demanded. You may get people to follow you by positional authority, but most of them will not follow you gladly. But, if you earn the respect of the people, they will follow you voluntarily with much positive energy. Therefore, it should be the goal of each of us that we earn respectful followers by the way we discipline our lives. I want us to take a look at the required discipline that Paul admonished Timothy to demonstrate and see how we too can become great leaders who will earn the followship of those we are trying to lead.

I. A GREAT LEADER MUST BE DISCIPLINED IN PURE DOCTRINE. vs. 6-7

When we read these two verses in the text, it is very easy for us to discover that obviously Timothy was having some trouble with the people standing true to the doctrine that Paul had taught the church at Ephesus when he was pastor there. The tendency is always for the people to stray when the founding leader has to leave and go somewhere else. I can truly attest this having been the pastor of several churches down through the years. I could spend many years

trying so hard to train and build up the people, but just as soon as I moved away, the people were inclined to leave the principles which I had tried to teach them for several years. In Acts 20, Paul had even warned the elders of the Ephesian church about the wolves that would try to come in and destroy the flocks. And, yet, with a young pastor, the people did exactly what Paul cautioned them against doing. This really shows the fickleness of human beings who profess to know Christ as their Savior!

So, Paul is now telling Timothy to make sure that he sticks by the pure doctrine that he has been taught, and that he continues to teach this same pure doctrine to the people. Let's take a brief look at the verses and glean just a few more good thoughts.

A. First, Paul tells Timothy that he must set the example in standing on pure doctrine by being a dedicated servant. v. 6

In verse six Paul starts out by reminding Timothy that he was to be the example, and that if he stood on the pure doctrine, then he could teach it to others. Then, Paul promised that Timothy would be rewarded by God for his dedicated service.

If we are to be great leaders for Christ, then we must stand firm on the pure doctrine of the Word of God, and we must voluntarily and correctly teach this doctrine to our disciples. Paul warns Timothy of moving away from what he has been taught, and so should we be warned as well. No Christian leader will ever be a great leader unless, he takes a stand on the pure doctrines of the Word of God. Satan loves nothing better than to take people who have received truth, and then convinces them to move away from the truth through subtle deception.

B. Secondly, Paul tells Timothy that he must set the example by having a discerning spirit. v. 7a

In the first part of this seventh verse, Timothy was instructed by Paul to have a discerning spirit about what the people were being taught by others. And, if his discerning spirit discovered that they were being taught false doctrine, he was to turn the people away from this false instruction. And so it is for all people who want to become great leaders in spiritual matters. A great leader must be willing and ready to take an immediate stand against false doctrine at the moment he or she discerns the faulty teaching. Yet, this stand must be taken in a loving tender way if it is at all possible to do so. However, sometimes being kind and compassionate doesn't work, and a stronger stand must be taken.

C. Thirdly, Paul tells Timothy that he must set the example with a definite spurning. v. 7b

This just means what I said in the previous paragraph. When false doctrine has been discerned, an immediate stand must be taken so that the false doctrine doesn't continue to grow and affect more and more people. Great leaders care very much about the welfare of their sheep, and they do everything they can to protect them.

II. A GREAT LEADER MUST BE DISCIPLINED IN PROFITABLE DEEDS. vs. 8-10

So much time is wasted today by scores of so called leaders because they don't sit down to give careful consideration to what they should give the most of their time to, and to what is the most profitable to their work and ministries and to the Kingdom of God. They are so preoccupied with with things that are temporary that they wear themselves out on things and activities that won't last. This must not be if a person is going to be a great leader. Instead, a great leader must have the personal discipline to discern what is truly profitable to his or her work or ministry, and what is of eternal value and consequence. Let's take a look at these three short verses to learn how to

discern what are profitable deeds and those which are not profitable. There are three main things that we need to take a look at in these verse.

A. First, a great leader will be disciplined to calculate eternal priorities. v. 8a

In this first phrase in verse 8, we discover that exercise for the body is good, but it is not of eternal value because the body is temporary. Therefore, a great leader will make the decision to set priorities in his or her life based upon the eternality of what they are doing with their time and activities. When a great leader is faced with the temporary and the eternal, the eternal will always be chosen over the temporal. And, this certainly requires much discipline for a leader to make this decision because there are so many carnal and shallow minded people who are always there to encourage one to give attention to what is profitable and makes one happy for the present instead of the eternal. I have a serious question? How much trouble do you have making this kind of decision? Do you more often choose the temporal or the eternal profitability of a deed or action? Your choice could reveal whether you are disciplined or not!

B. Secondly, a great leader will be disciplined to claim eternal promises. v. 8b

In talking about the latter part of verse eight, I must ask another question. Are you more concerned with the life that you presently have or the one that is yet to come for the child of God? You see, whichever choice you make most often is a true revelation of what you value the most. We must get our value systems right and begin to treasure that which is eternal over that which is temporary. Why? Because we will have far longer to enjoy the profitable fruits of our labors in heaven than we will down here. Therefore, what we give our time to, and where we place our emphasis will be rewarded either by fading glory down here on earth, or everlasting appreciation from Jesus and others once we get to heaven. I don't know about you, but I would much rather have more treasure on the other side as to have all of the wealth this world can provide. So, I encourage you to join me in claiming the promises that are eternal and living every day with an eternal perspective.

C. Thirdly, a great leader will be disciplined to conquer expected problems. vs. 9-10

Now, I surely wish that these next two verses were not in this text, but they are. They tell us that when we live our lives with right and eternal priorities and when we claim the eternal promises, we must be ready to face certain persecution and problems. The reason for these promised problems is that we are in a spiritual warfare and we trust in the living God. And, because it is God's will for all men to be saved, when we live with the one focus of our lives being to win men to Christ, then we will be constantly under attack. And, may I say that this is so true with our work here in Africa. There is not one day that goes by but what we are under constant attack from Satan because we are seeing so many people come to Christ. But yet, we know that we are more than conquerors through the power of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we do not work up to victory, but we work down from victory. We may lose a few battles along the way, but we know that the war was truly won at Calvary and through the resurrection! Praise God, we are on the winning the side!

III. A GREAT LEADER MUST BE DISCIPLINED IN PERSONAL DUTY. vs. 11-16

Now, before moving on with this third point in our study which is indeed a long one, we need to go back and remember what we discovered in the introduction to this session. Remember that Paul was writing to the young pastor, Timothy, who was having a lot of problems trying to earn the respect of the people in the church at Ephesus. In these next verses we learn that Paul's main instruction for Timothy was that he would become a great example to the people, even if he was

a young pastor. Paul goes into much detail about the kind of life he should live if he was going to gain the respect and fellowship of the people. In other words, if Timothy was going to become a great leader, he needed to really be disciplined in his every day life before all the people. Let's take a look at Paul's instructions for Timothy and learn how we too can become great leaders by demonstrating great lives of personal discipline.

A. Notice that Timothy was to be disciplined in his public life. vs. 11-13

1. Paul told Timothy that his proclaiming life was to be Scriptural. v. 11

Paul never wavered from the truth that the only doctrine that was to be taught by him and by those he had mentored was the blessed Word of God. In verse eleven, Paul instructs Timothy to command others to teach the Word, and for himself to stay true to teaching the Word as well. There was no compromise with the Word when it came to Paul the Apostle.

2. Paul also told Timothy that his personal life was to be taken seriously as he lived publicly before others. v. 12

In this wonderful verse, Paul tells Timothy that he was not to provide any room for people to cast aspersion upon his youthfulness, and the only way this would be possible was to live a life of good example beyond reproach before everyone. Then Paul gets explicit about each individual part of Timothy's life. Notice the following instruction from Paul to this young leader.

- a. Timothy was to be a good example in speech.
- b. Timothy was to be a good example in conduct.
- c. Timothy was to be a good example in love.
- d. Timothy was to be a good example in passion or spirit.
- e. Timothy was to be a good example in faith.
- f. Timothy was to be a good example in purity.

3. Next, Paul told Timothy that his devotional life was to be based upon Scripture. v. 13

Timothy was instructed by Paul to devote himself to a life of discipline which included the following three things:

- (a) He was to give himself to reading- -clearing up.
- (b) He was to give himself to exhortation- -stirring up.
- (c) He was to give himself to doctrine- - building up.

So, we learn that in order for Timothy to earn the respect of those within the fellowship of the Ephesian church, he had to be disciplined in his private devotional life so that it literally affected all of those around him. Truthfully, when one becomes so close to Jesus in his or her devotional life, it is impossible to keep this to one's self. It will always result in stirring up and building up those other believers around him or her. Another question? Have you experienced such a disciplined devotional life lately that you have inspired those around you? If not, now would surely be a good time to start!

B. Notice that Timothy was to be disciplined in his private life. vs. 14-16

Although there is some overlapping in this passage when it comes to the private life of

Timothy, Paul does continue to go deeper with his instructions for this young leader so that he doesn't miss becoming the respected leader that God wanted him to become. So, in these last few verses, Paul reminds Timothy that he should really be on his guard to walk a disciplined life in five more areas. Let's look at these areas and see what God is trying to show us that we can become great leaders.

1. First, Paul tells Timothy that he needed to maintain a constant carefulness. v. 14

In this verse Paul told Timothy that he should always remember the divine gift which God had bestowed upon him, and that he should never neglect to give attention to and develop his ministerial gift. Paul wanted Timothy to realize that there was no higher calling than to be called to be a pastor; a man of God!

Also, this verse tells us that Paul did not want Timothy to forget those who had affirmed his call and gift by the laying on of their hands. It would have been so disrespectful for Timothy to have remained discouraged and walked away from his calling after all of these dear people had attested God's hand upon Timothy by placing their hands upon him. I would to God that we still had this kind of respect in this generation for those who have mentored us and affirmed our God given gifts. Great leaders never forget those who God used to bring them to where they now are.

2. Secondly, Paul tells Timothy that he needed to maintain a continual contemplation. v. 15

In this verse, Paul instructs young Timothy to make sure that he meditates upon the good things that Paul had been talking about. Undoubtedly Paul was pondering how easy it is for a man to take his eyes off of his call, his gifts, and the goodness of God when he is going through discouragement, which obviously Timothy was doing at this time. Thus, Paul wanted him to keep his mind on the the blessings of God in spite of those who may not be respecting Timothy as their young pastor.

The second thing that Paul admonished Timothy to do is to not only meditate upon the good gifts of God, but he tells him that he should remain faithful to his calling and never lose his passion for the work God has placed him in. This is a great admonition because it is so easy to lose your passion as a leader if you are under constant attack as Timothy was.

For many years as a man of God, it has been my prayer that as I get older and as I face many attacks by Satan, that I do not lose the passion for my ministry. I want so very much to die with more passion in my heart for the work than I had numbers of years ago when God called me. Folks, let me encourage you and me to never lose sight of the fact that we have been told by God that if we are faithful in His service that we will suffer persecution in this life. But, let's not quit nor give up in the battle because we know who ultimately wins. The greatest way in the world to make a lasting impact for Christ is to stay faithful to the end. Then, those who have been observing us will have had a good example and many will profit from the example we have provided. So, keep meditating upon the goodness of God, the call of God, and the gifts that God has given us to use for His glory! In other words, don't ever lose the wonder of God's Sovereign choice of you for the the ministry or the position as a Christian leader.

3. Thirdly, Paul tells Timothy that he needed to maintain a careful consideration. v. 16a

In the first part of verse 16, Paul reminds Timothy of the importance of keeping himself in the right relationship with God, because he will never be a good leader for others unless he sticks by the stuff and stays faithful in his service to the Lord. Obviously about this time Timothy was about ready to quit, but with the encouragement that Paul was giving him, he could find the strength to go on. May we be encouraged to follow Timothy's example by continuing to push on with our service for the Lord. Great leaders will always have what I call stickability if they are going to be fruitful until the very end of their lives. I pray that all of us will be able to remain faithful and beneficial to the Kingdom of God until God is through with us.

4. Lastly, Paul tells Timothy that he needed to maintain a courageous continuation. v. 16b

In this very last phrase of our text, Timothy is admonished by Paul to keep on going forward and to not give up because if he stayed faithful, God would bless him and deliver him from the embarrassment of quitting, and God would also provide a positive influence upon those around him by his faithfulness. This should be the desire of each of us as Christian leaders. We need to stay faithful and keep on until the very end. Then, those who doubted our integrity and our abilities, will be shown that we were genuine and their persecution and criticism will have been ill founded. May God help all of us to become great leaders by following the example of the young man Timothy. What a pattern for us to follow!

Conclusion

We now come to the end of this great text! What a thrill it has been for me to study this material, and then hopefully to have encouraged you to become a man of great discipline in your life so that you might become the great leader God wants you to become. We may not necessary like the term discipline, but it is absolutely mandatory for us to be disciplined in every area of our lives if we are going to become the kind of great leaders God wants us to become. I plead with all of you to really give attention to the subject matter we have covered in this text, and if there are some areas of your lives that you are not disciplined, I pray that you might give these areas to God before this seminar is over.

Maybe tonight before you go to bed you can spend some quiet time with just you and Jesus and confess the areas of neglect, and then make a brand new commitment of your life to Christ in those areas where you have been failing. Believe me, I know what it is like to think often of quitting, especially because of my age and health, but every time I really ponder the thought of stopping, I have to remember what Paul told young Timothy and I must continue to push on. Paul told Timothy earlier in this fourth chapter that if we trust and serve the living God that we will suffer persecution, but he then went on to encourage Timothy not to quit because of the persecution. May God help us to not quit as well, but to keep on keeping on for the cause of Christ! Just remember this, "We can never walk away from the call of God for our lives." Why? Because the call of God is without repentance! So, we must go on and be faithful to the very end because of the One Who has called us! We have a tremendous responsibility to Him and we must not turn back! Great leaders stay faithful to the end! It is not those who start well that wins the prize, but it is those who finish well! I don't know about you, but I surely do want to finish well!

Session 3

“A Great Leader Must Have The Right Attitude”

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11

Introduction

In Dr. John Maxwell's book entitled, "Developing The Leader Within You," pages 97 and 98, he quotes writer and preacher, Chuck Swindoll concerning attitude. The following is what Dr. Swindoll said about attitude:

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, or a home. The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. Nor can we change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We also cannot change the inevitable. The only thing that we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you--we are in charge of our attitudes.

Just as attitudes are the extra pluses in life, they also make the difference in leading others. Leadership has less to do with position than it does with disposition. The disposition of a leader is important because it will influence the way the followers think and feel. Great leaders understand that the right attitude will set the right atmosphere, which enables the right responses from others."

I don't know about you folks, but a good attitude is very hard for this old type A personality to maintain. I make no excuses for my sin, but I grew up in a family where most of our family members had difficulty having a positive attitude. As a matter of fact, several years ago when I was in seminary working on a graduate degree, I learned that there is some science that seems to indicate that when people have a predisposition to being negative, it may be contributable to a genetic order which some families have. Yet, the scripture tells us that a bad attitude is wrong. Therefore, those of us who have a predisposition to be negative have to work harder at having a good attitude. Now, if what I am saying seem that I am making excuses for sometimes having a bad attitude, I am not! But, I do know that the only way this old preacher can have a good attitude is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and when I am full of His Spirit and power, I can have the mind of Christ. So, our study in this session pertains to having the mind of Christ. Can I tell you that when you have the mind of Christ, you will not have to worry about having the right attitude. For, Jesus displayed the right attitude and if He lives within us, then we must have His mind when it comes to attitude. And truthfully, if we have His mind, we will have the attitude of a servant. And, if we have the mind of a servant, we will demonstrate servant leadership.

Now, I need to be quick to say that having the mind of Christ does not mean that you and I should walk around with our tails tucked between our legs figuratively speaking in some kind of pseudo-humility! But, it does mean that we will think and act like Christ in our thinking and in our actions. Thus, we will have on our minds what Jesus has on His mind, we will love what He loves, hate what He hates, and we will live for one purpose, and that is to do the will of God and follow His purpose for our lives.

In Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus said, “..Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall

not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” Therefore, great leaders must have the attitude of Jesus Christ and if these leaders have His attitude, they will have the attitude of a servant with others on their minds. I want us to follow the example of Jesus, and I ask that you really pay much attention to our text for this session’s study, and see what God might be saying to you about your attitude. Someone has said, “Attitude determines your altitude!” In other words, how far you go up depends upon what kind of attitude you maintain! May God help all of us to have the right attitude if we want to be great leaders!

In Paul’s letter to the Philippian believers, he said much about how to have joy in the midst of suffering and deprivation. And when he wrote this second chapter, he provided some wonderful verses under the anointing of God to help us have the right attitude by having the mind of Christ. Let’s look at verses 1-11, and discover how to follow the example of Jesus with our attitudes.

I. NOTICE PAUL’S ENTREATY TO COMMONALITY. vs. 1-4

In these four verses that we are about to study together, we will discover that Paul’s desire for the Christians in Philippi was that they would dwell together in love and unity. He told them in the text that if they all put on the mind of Christ, they would have everything in common based upon their relationship with Christ and with the other believers in the family. And, if they had the mind of Christ controlling them, not one of them would feel better than the other, and each person would esteem his brother or sister better than themselves. So, Paul’s appeal was for the church to get together in unity, think like Jesus, and serve each other with a humble spirit.

And today, I would like to appeal to all of you to get together in the body of Christ and begin to esteem each other better than yourselves, and if this happens, you will have a Christlike servant spirit which will provide the right attitude for you to become a great leader. So, let’s move ahead and look at the text with more detail and see what God is trying to show us.

A. Notice that Paul describes the basis of our commonality. v. 1

What is the basis of our commonality in the body of Christ? Well, it is based upon the fact that each of us has been born into the family of God at the moment of salvation, and with this new birth, we all have been recipients of God’s consolation and the comfort of His love. And, because of our position in the family of God, we have the privilege and responsibility of fellowshiping with other believers because we have the same nature, the same Holy Spirit, and we have the same emotions. Therefore, it is not too much to ask that we all get along with each other, and serve each other in love and unity.

Let me tell you that because of the basis of our commonality, it is sinful for us to make excuses about not getting along with others. God not only expects it, but He demands it if we are going to be like Jesus.

B. Notice that Paul describes the beauty of our commonality. v. 2

It is truly amazing to me how God can take people from hundreds of different backgrounds and put them together in the body of Christ with the expectation that all of these saved people will get along with each other. How can this possibly happen? It can happen because of the command denominator of the Holy Spirit who comes to indwell every believer. And, if every believer will submit himself or herself to the Lordship of the Holy Spirit, it is easy for all of these different people to get along. Why? Because people

submitted to the control of the Holy Spirit will esteem each other person better than himself or herself, and will demonstrate a servant attitude toward everyone in the body. Do you have this beautiful attitude? Do you demonstrate love and respect for others? If not, today during this seminar would be a good time to begin!

Paul said to the Philippians that if they would begin to practice this kind of servant spirit toward each other, it would bring joy to his heart. And may I say, that even more important, this kind of spirit will bring joy to the heart of Jesus and it will bring a positive influence on those you are trying to lead. If this is accomplished, then the outcome will be common mindset and common unity.

C. Notice that Paul describes the burden of our commonality. vs. 3-4

Now, in these two verses, we come down to the bottom line where we must decide, "Will we practice this Christlike spirit, or will we disregard His instructions?" In verse three Paul told the early Philippian church that they were to do nothing with strife or vain glory. Instead, they were to treat others with humility and lowliness of mind. They were to esteem others higher than themselves, and see themselves as the servants of others in obedience to God.

May I say to you that these instructions are very hard for the average Christian and they can become a heavy burden. But, with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we can develop and demonstrate this servant spirit toward others. We can't do it by ourselves because it is probably the hardest thing that any person will ever do, but when we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, it is easy to do because Jesus does it through us. May God help us to develop this kind of servant spirit!

When we develop this attitude of a servant just like Jesus demonstrated, then it will be lived out in the lives of every person as that person allows others and their needs to take precedence over their own needs and wants. I believe that the greatest evidence of really being saved, is that one's value system changes from himself to others. Check out yours today! Do you desire that others be blessed more than you? If not, maybe here is another good place for you to meet with God and ask Him to change your heart and attitude! Would you rather that God give me \$100, or would you rather have it yourself? This is tough isn't it? Well, that is why you and I can't do it, but the Holy Spirit through us can cause us to have this kind of attitude.

II. NOTICE PAUL'S EXAMPLE OF CONDESCENSION. vs. 5-8

By now you are probably having mixed feelings about this study! How on earth can you desire more for others than you can for yourself? How could you as a leader want those you are training to eventually rise above you? Well, you can if you have the right attitude; an attitude just like Jesus Who gave up all of heaven and its riches and condescended to becoming a human being just like us. Then, in addition to coming to this world in humility, He died on the cross and arose from the dead to redeem us and give us eternal life. In other words, He came down that we might go up! And, if this life is a training field for the life to come, we must learn humility and submission because when we get to heaven, all of us will be bowing before God the Father with brokenness and genuine humility. It might be easier for us to humble ourselves and submit to others here on earth, if we start looking at it as a training ground for our worship in eternity! So, let's take a look at the next few verses and see what Jesus is trying to teach us about condescension and humility. This could be the greatest lesson that we will ever learn! **Just remember that meekness is not weakness, but it is strength under control with a teachable spirit!**

A. Notice that Jesus condescended from His position as God. vs. 5-6

In these two verses Paul told the Philippian believers that they were to have the same mind of Jesus Christ when it came to condescension. Just as Jesus divested Himself of the outward and visible manifestation of the Godhead, and came down to this earth in human form, so are we to divest ourselves of our outward position of pride and ego, and become humble like Jesus did. Jesus never gave up his Godship, but He did give up His majesty and came to earth in the form of a baby in the manger to become like us so that He could eventually redeem us. Again I would say, that He came down to us so that we can one day go up to heaven!

An additional wonderful thought about these two verses is that Jesus' coming to this earth was done voluntarily, not by the coercion of the Father. He came voluntarily so that we could be redeemed from our fallen state, and this is the way we are to submit to those around us voluntarily! Forced submission is not real submission at all! If I hold a gun on someone, I may threaten him and make him do anything I desire for him to do, but this is not leadership. This is manipulation! Therefore, in order for me to expect and receive the respect and submission of others voluntarily, I must set the example as Jesus did and earn this respect and fellowship by dying to self and capitulating to others. And let me say one more time, this is truly one of the hardest things we could be requested to do. But, we will never be great leaders until we through the power of the Holy Spirit get the victory and power to submit to others. Great leaders esteem others better than themselves, and they earn fellowship by being humble servants.

B. Notice that Jesus condescended from His position of glory. v. 7

One day many years ago, we were conducting an evangelism service in Luzira Women's Prison. When the invitation was given, several women were saved. I will never forget at that moment that one of the young lady prisoners began to weep as she knelt on her knees on the floor of the prison. Suddenly, the Officer In Charge of that prison fell down on her knees and embraced the crying prisoner who had just gotten saved. In all my years working in African prisons, I had never seen this before! What condescension and humility that O.I.C. showed to this precious young lady. That day I saw right before my eyes the spirit and like mindedness of Jesus in that very moment. From a powerful position of glory and respect, that dear officer humbled herself and became a servant to the weeping lady. This is the kind of spirit and attitude that is needed in great leaders.

Just like Jesus, we need to humble ourselves, forget about our reputations, and become servants of those who so desperately need us. It is not only in America that I see proud arrogant people who profess to be Christians, but I have seen it in Africa as well. It doesn't matter what country we live in, Jesus set the example for all of us when He gave up His glory and took on the form of flesh so that He could die on the cross. Could I ask you, "Have you died to self?" Do you get offended when others get in line in front of you? Do you ever feel that you deserve special attention because of who you are or what you have done through the years? I know that I am guilty and sometimes I have a problem with having the right kind of attitude, but I will never have this problem if I walk and live in the power of the Holy Spirit and have the mind of Christ. Just think, Jesus the Son of God, gave up all of his glory and position in heaven so that He could come down and rescue fallen humanity! What a privilege it is for us to even be saved because of the great sacrifice that Jesus made for us! It is truly humbling just to think about it!

C. Notice that Jesus condescended to the power of the grave. v. 8

Imagine this! The precious Son of God Who had enjoyed the glories of heaven since far beyond the creation of earth and man, giving up His royal throne and condescending to the form of a human being so that He Who could not die before His earthly birth, could ultimately lay down His life and submit to the humiliation of death! All of this was done so that you and I could live and never die. Surely, it is not too much to ask that we who have been gloriously saved and redeemed from the power of death be willing to die to self while we live here on earth. We must humble ourselves following the example of our Savior and give up our pride, ego, and independent arrogance, in order that we might help to redeem others and minister to those who need the message of the Gospel. Great leaders must first condescend from their positions of authority and place their major emphasis upon those they are trying to lead. Great leaders will indeed die to the selfish and self-centered desires of the flesh in order that their followers receive the ministry that they desperately need. It is just simply, "Who do we consider to be the most important?"

III. NOTICE PAUL'S EXPLANATION OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION TO CORONATION.

vs. 9-11

This statement might seem to be rather confusing, but the fact is that in the last three verses of our study for this session, we discover that after Jesus had condescended to become man and then died on the cross, Paul reminded the Philippians, that He had been restored to his regal and royal throne in heaven. In other words, Paul wanted the Philippians to know that after they had humbled themselves and submitted themselves to serve others, that one day they too would be exalted to join Jesus in heaven where He will reign forever and forever. Paul reminds these believers that Jesus did indeed pay a tremendous price by coming down from heaven to die for us on the cross, that when His earthly journey was accomplished that He went back to heaven where He sits and rules today.

I must tell you that through my many years of service to Christ and others, the hardest thing for me to accept was not the need for me to esteem others better than myself, but the hardest thing has been to accept the treatment that many of these whom we have served, give to us after we have faithfully served them. Over and over again, I stand in amazement at how quickly people forget those who maybe have even led them to Christ, and then walk away and reject the very people who have presented them with the gift of eternal life. No wonder that Nehemiah mentioned at least four times in his great book that he wanted God to remember the good that he had done for God's people because the people quickly forget!

In these last few verses in this session, we are reminded that the cross was not the end for Jesus, and neither was the suffering and humiliation which He received while He was here on earth. But, after His suffering and sorrow came his deliverance and exaltation. After His agony and gloom came His coronation and glory! And, so shall it be for us one day! One day every person in every tribe and nation shall bow before the Son of God and give Him the glory, although many of these may have rejected Him here on earth and gone to hell. Yes, they will all bow before Him and give Him praise and glory! But for those who rejected, it will be too late! I don't know about you, but I want to use my entire life to give Him glory now, and then when I get my new glorified body to be able to praise Him even in a greater way because my praise will then be perfect! Now, let's briefly look at the four ways that Paul said Jesus was exalted after He died on the cross and went back to heaven.

A. Paul stated that Jesus had been given a royal throne. v. 9a

B. Paul stated that Jesus had been given a royal title. v. 9b

- C. Paul stated that Jesus had been given a royal triumph. v. 10
- D. Paul stated that Jesus had been given a royal testimony. v. 11

My friends, what a day that will be one day in the future when we no longer live by faith, but we shall then see Jesus face to face. What a time of everlasting celebration when we are able to bow at His feet along with the saved of all of the ages and say worthy is the Lamb because He was our Savior, our Redeemer, and our everlasting Lord and Master. I don't know about you dear people, but this really excites me about what is ahead for us. And, I really don't think that it is too much to ask for us to humble ourselves now in this present world in order to serve others, when we know that this is only dress rehearsal for heaven. Great leaders who have the attitudes of servants walk in on their knees and ultimately receive the rewards for their faithfulness at the Judgment Seat of Christ! Wow! What a glorious day that will be!

Conclusion

Now as we wrap up this third session, I would like to remind all of us that if we discover, develop, and cultivate the attitude of a servant, God has promised to raise us up one day in the future. To say what I said in the introduction of this chapter, we are never more like Jesus than when we humble ourselves in order to serve others. Please keep this in mind! When our attitude is just like the mind of Christ, we will maintain a positive attitude, keep our minds singularly focused, and we will live with a great spirit of expectancy looking for the best which is to come. Great leaders inspire others by their attitudes more than anything else. If we want to be great leaders which earn the respect and fellowship of others, we must make sure that we have a good attitude! This good attitude helps us build relationships with others, draw people to us, and it inspires others to keep on going on when they would be prone to quit. Yet, I know through my many failures that having the mind of Christ attitude every moment of every day is quite difficult. Yet, if we practice and cultivate the presence of God in our lives from the time we get up until we go to bed in the evening, we can think like Jesus, act like Jesus, speak like Jesus, love like Jesus, and we can live with an eternal perspective like Jesus. May God help us to work on our attitudes if our attitudes are not right! Great leaders have great attitudes!

Session 4

“A Great Leader Must Have The Right Aspirations”

Scripture: Philippians 3:10-14

Introduction

We now come to the second day and fourth session of our leadership seminar. I trust that you were blessed by the sessions we spent together yesterday, and I pray that as we begin this morning, that you will even be more enthused about becoming the great leader that God wants you to become. I ask you to really apply yourself today and glean every nugget of truth that you can get to help you become that person of influence which God has planned for you.

In this fourth session we are going to study my favorite passage of Scripture in all of the Bible. It has to do with Paul's great desire to push on to the end of his life and race and finish the work that God had given for him to do. The subject matter of this portion of scripture pertains to having the right aspirations to move on to become great leaders. When I use the word aspirations, I am referring to having the right ambitions, the right motives, and the right desires in our hearts as we seek to lead others. Maybe I should just stop here and ask the question, “Do you have the proper aspirations, the proper ambitions, the proper motives, or the proper desires to become a great leader?” In other words, do your aspirations and the other things I just mentioned align with God's will, God's plan, or God's purpose for your life. Or, do you have your own agenda and while you try to push it, you are asking God to bless your plans or ideas? If this is so, then your aspirations and ambitions are wrong! As we have heard stated so many times in recent years, the work of God is not about us and our plans, but it is about God and His plans. I want us to take a careful look at what it means to have the right aspirations and see how our desires and ambitions measure up to God's plans for us. I plead with you to really approach this study with an open and objective mind, but I believe that most of us need some help in the area of our desires and motives. Now, let's get started with the study of this wonderful passage of Scripture.

I. IF WE ARE GOING TO BE GREAT LEADERS, WE MUST ASPIRE TO KNOW THE PERSON OF CHRIST. vs. 10-11

I hope you get what this statement says. It does not say that we should aspire to know more about the person of Christ, but it states that we should aspire to know the person of Christ. This means that we should have the desire to know Christ with a greater intimacy, and that through our intimacy with Him, we get to know much about His personality as He relates to us, and we will learn what it will take to conform us to His image.

Let me stop here and say that we must not assume that everyone here is a believer! We hope that everyone is, but just in case there is one here that may just not have the assurance of salvation, let me tell you that you cannot get to know the person of Christ in a more intimate way until you know for sure that you are saved and a part of His family. If you don't know this with 100% assurance, then you need to tell us right now so that we can stop and take the time to lead you to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Now, let's look further at aspiring to know the person of Jesus Christ in a more intimate way!

A. To aspire to know the person of Christ more intimately, we must have spiritually enlightenment.
v. 10a

In the first part of verse 10, Paul says that he wants to know Christ! This means that Paul desires to know Jesus Christ in a more intimate and personal way. Just like a husband and wife want to know each other better once they are married, Paul is saying that since I have been born into the family of God and Jesus is my Lord, I aspire to become more and more intimate with Him so that He can reveal Himself to me. Paul knew that the greatest knowledge and understanding that a believer can have is to have a deeper knowledge and understanding of the One who died to redeem him. In order for this to happen, Christ has to enlighten us because this special kind of relationship doesn't just happen, it comes through Divine and spiritual illumination. What about this question? Has Jesus turned on the spiritual light for you recently? If not, I think you know whose fault it is!

- B. To aspire to know the person of Christ more intimately, we must have spiritual empowerment.
v. 10b

In this portion of this verse, Paul is saying that in order to live in this sin-darkened world, we must have the power of the resurrected Lord empowering us to live above the seductions and enticements of the world. And, I can assure you that God will provide this resurrection power if we will honestly confess our sins and ask Him for it. This power of the resurrected Christ comes through the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And, God will not fill a dirty vessel! So, if you want to live above the enticements of the world, you must have a clean life and be filled with God's Spirit. Great leaders who earn respect must live above the world and keep their lives clean.

- C. To aspire to know the person of Christ more intimately, we must have spiritual endurance.
v. 10c

In this third phrase of this verse, we learn that in order to have the resurrected power of God, we must also experience the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. I sincerely wish that this part of the verse was not included in the text. Why? Because not one of us enjoys going through suffering. Yet, we will never know how God can deliver if we never face difficult trials. Thus, it is required of all God's children that we be given spiritual endurance to face and be victorious over the trials and problems of this life. And, I think I need to mention that the more serious you get about serving God and winning people to Jesus, the greater your trials and attacks will be. Why? Because Satan is a defeated and wounded foe, and he can't stand to see people saved. Therefore, the greater the harvest we are involved in, the greater the attacks will be against us. So, with the power and strength of God's Holy Spirit, we must endure much suffering in order for us to relate to the sufferings of our Lord and His terrible death on the cross. I can assure you of this, that the greater the trials, the greater the victory once you have come through that valley to the other side!

- D. To aspire to know the person of Christ more intimately, we must reach spiritual equality. v. 10d

What does this mean? Well, it means that by going through tremendous suffering, we learn to identify with the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, which in turn helps us to appreciate the price He paid for our redemption, thus, we will love Him more. The greater suffering we endure, the greater sense of equality we will have with His suffering. Therefore, we should come to the conclusion that what happened to Jesus was truly unjust, and what He did to stay on that cross and die for us was truly more than we could ever value enough! What a glorious blessing!

- E. To aspire to know the person of Christ more intimately, we must reach spiritual elevation. v. 11

This is truly one of the most difficult verses and probably one of the most argued verses in all of the Bible. With a first glance at the verse it would seem that Paul was saying that after going through so much suffering, he just hoped he could make it to the day of the resurrection when he would be free from all of the trials and sorrows. Yet, taken in context, it would seem that because of Paul's stated aspirations in verse ten, Paul was passionate about receiving the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit so that he could live on a higher level of Christian deportment to prevent him from submitting to so much temptation. I feel strongly that this is what Paul was saying. He desired to live such a victorious Christian life, through the power of the resurrection that he would live above the trials and disappointments of this life. In other words, Paul really wanted to live a victorious life so that others might see Christ in him as he faced so many problems. Great leaders learn to distinguish themselves by the great way they handle problems. So, if you want to be a great leader, you need to surrender to the power of the resurrected Lord to be an over comer for Jesus!

II. IF WE ARE GOING TO BE GREAT LEADERS, WE MUST ASPIRE TO KNOW THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST. vs. 12-13

Beloved friends, do you understand that God has a divine and sovereign purpose for your life? Do you know that God planned your purpose before the foundation of the world? And, do you also realize that you will never be consistently happy and fulfilled until you find God's plan and purpose for your life. The reason that so many professing believers are so unhappy in their lives today is simply because they are living outside of God's perfect will for their lives. And, if we are trying to lead others when we ourselves don't know for sure what we are supposed to be doing, it is certain that we will never be good leaders, but will lead our thought-to-be followers down a dead end street. I want us to look at four principles from this text that will help us to really discern the purpose of Christ for our lives. Then, once we have found His purpose for us, maybe we can lead others to discover God's purpose for their lives. Let's look at these four principles.

A. If we are going to find God's purpose for our lives, we must have a teachable spirit. v. 12a

Every time I read this verse, I can almost shout because I think of this great man called the Apostle Paul saying emphatically that I have not yet arrived, and there is still much for me to learn. Can you grasp this? This man probably knew Jesus Christ better than most of the people that have ever lived, and yet, he was the first to admit that he still had so much to learn in his personal relationship with Jesus, and about his plan in God's purpose for his life. I don't know about you, but this surely gives me hope!

As all of you know, I have been in ministry for almost 44 years. And throughout these years, I have had many people to ask me what do I believe is the greatest characteristic of a successful leader or pastor. I must tell you that I believe I could include two equal traits that are the greatest! One is that a successful and great leader will always have a teachable spirit, and he or she will have the anointing of God. And, I don't think you can have the anointing unless you have the teachable spirit.

So, let me ask you, "Do you think and act like you have all the answers?" Have you closed your minds to what others try to teach or show you? If so, your ministry is about over! Yes, I said that your ministry is about over! When Christian leaders arrive at a point where they think that they have all the answers, and when they don't leave any room for someone else's advice, their closed mindedness will ultimately make them a self-elevated expert in every field, and no one even wants to be around a person like this. So, if you feel that you have arrived and you have all the answers, it won't be long until your ministry is over!

B. If we are going to find God's purpose for our lives, we must have a targeting spirit. v. 12b

In the second part of verse twelve, Paul mentions to the Philippian believers that although he has not arrived, he is determined to stay focused and keep his eyes on the purpose that God had for him in the first place because he knew that Christ Jesus had saved him for a reason. Paul was not about to lose focus on his goal to finish his race well and receive the prize that was awaiting him. We too must have this same spirit of determination if we are to discover God's purpose for our lives. We must whole heartedly target the goal which is the completion of our work when we die or when Jesus comes again. Please check out your motive to see if you have the right motive to keep focused on what God has called you to do. It is so easy to get side tracked with so many things pulling for our attention, but we must keep moving forward until the prize is won.

C. If we are going to find God's purpose for our lives, we must have a triumphant spirit. v. 13a

In the third part of this verse, Paul mentions the fact for him to run his race completely to the finish line, he had to forget those things in the past that were prone to weight him down and hold him back. He absolutely refused to allow anything in his past to be the hindrance to the prize that was awaiting him. And we should be the same way. Let me mention several things in our pasts that seem to hinder our work in the present and our quest for the winner's prize in the future. Let me just list these and not try to go into detail with each one of them for the sake of time.

1. We must forget our past sins.
2. We must forget our past sorrows.
3. We must forget our past stumbles.
4. We must forget our past strife.
5. We must forget our past scars.
6. We must forget our past scares.
7. We must forget our past successes.

It is absolutely amazing how many leaders miss God's best for their lives because they fail to get rid of the past and move on. Yet, this is what Paul told the Philippians that they had to do in order to discover God's will and finish the task that God had for them. I will just simply ask you one question! Are you living in the past?

D. If we are going to find God's purpose for our lives, we must have a tenacious spirit. v. 13b

As odd as it may seem, Paul told these early believers that to finish their race and fulfill God's purpose for their lives, they had to have a tenacious spirit. This was a spirit that would keep them running when all their energy was gone, when others were falling out, and when with every hurting breath they breathed, they just felt they couldn't go on. Paul reminded them that he had determined to reach down inside of himself for that last ounce of energy, for that last rush of adrenaline, and for that last breath of air and push his chest out for the finish line ribbon! Paul was tenacious to the very finish line, and we must also be tenacious if we are going to set the example for our followers as great leaders. May God help us to follow the example of this great man Paul!

III. IF WE ARE GOING TO BECOME GREAT LEADERS, WE MUST ASPIRE TO KNOW THE PRIZE OF CHRIST. v. 14

We now come to the last verse in this sessions study. This too is a great verse, and we need to make sure that we don't miss what God is saying to us because we are tired or weary. Please pay

attention to what God wants to show us, and I believe that you can remain faithful to finish the race and receive the prize that God has in store for those who stay faithful unto the end. Let's look now at this last point!

A. To know and receive the prize ahead of us, a great leader must have perseverance. v. 14 a

This first phrase goes right along with what Paul said in verse 13. He was determined to exert himself to run this race like a well-trained athlete and make sure that nothing interfered with him getting the prize that God had for him. I hope we can have this same determination. In **II John, verse eight, the Bible says, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."** This is truly a scary verse! I am not exactly sure that I know everything that John was saying, but I understand enough to realize that it would be so sad to have worked so hard throughout ones life, and then because of some moral failure or other problem, that person would lose a full reward.

Folks, I don't know all that God has in store for His faithful leaders, but I surely look with anticipation toward that day when God provides these rewards. Personally, it would be rewards enough just to see Jesus face to face, and then see thousands of people who were in heaven because of my ministry. I surely hope this happens, and I don't want to fall by the way side on the way to the finish line, and I pray that you don't as well.

B. To know and receive the prize ahead of us, a great leader must have perception. v. 14b

As I just stated, I don't know all that God's rewards for us entail, but there is one thing for sure, I sometimes sit and think about what it is going to be like when we get there, see Jesus face to face, and the fellowship with thousands of people that have come to Christ because of me and JoAnne. I must tell you that I get somewhat misty-eyed thinking about this. If a runner doesn't envision the prize before him, he will give up and quit running, because if there is no prize, the race is in vain. However, thank God that He never breaks a promise, and He has truly promised to reward all of us who will be faithful to the end. And truthfully, when we get old and tired in the race, it is easy to lose focus on the prize. But, by God's grace, I want to keep dreaming, envisioning, and seeing the prize so that I don't get side tracked along the way to the finish line. I hope you will join me in this endeavor because the prize is just ahead and so is Jesus!

C. To know and receive the prize ahead of us, a great leader must have priorities. v. 14c

Now, we come to the last phrase of the last verse in this session. And, may I say to you that this is a very important phrase. Paul told the Philippian believers that his calling to run the race and finish the course was a "high calling". If that was true, and it surely was, Paul knew that his calling should be his main priority in life. He knew that he could not afford to allow his attention to be distracted by other things; even the things that were good and not necessarily evil. Yet, finishing the race would be his priority, and anything that weighted him down and caused him to lose focus was not of God, but of Satan. Therefore, he kept the main thing the main thing and would not be detoured from the goal at the finish line.

Let me stop and say right here that in all of my almost 44 years of ministry, I have never seen a day in which so many pastors, Christian leaders, and Christian workers have so much clutter in their lives which prevent them from giving priority to their high calling. It is so easy to be pulled by the desire for money, positions in religious circles, and even by just plain busyness that we miss God's best and never really finish the race. Never one

time did Jesus promise us that this race would be easy. Instead, he promised that we would suffer for His sake, and that being a leader for Him would require some real toughness. Warfare calls for toughness, and friends, we are in spiritual warfare! God never called us to comfort, but He called us to conquest! He never called us to play in a game, but He promised that we would be in many battles. So, let's stay faithful as good soldiers of the cross, and let's keep on the winning team. Why? Because the prize is just ahead!

Conclusion

We have now come to the end of this session! My, what a great study from God's word! If we didn't cover any other passage in all of the Bible during this seminar, this one alone would have been worth the effort because it is such a rich passage of scripture. I hope you have discovered that to become a great leader, your aspirations must be right. If you don't aspire to greatness, I assure you that you will never obtain it. Many believers, and even leaders, can be mediocre, but it takes a dynamic spiritual athlete who will pay the price to get into spiritual shape and then run with patience the race that is before us. I pray that everyone of you will leave this seminar with a resolute desire to get rid of the clutter that weights you down, and go back to your ministries with a resolve to finish the race and win the prize. Please remember that according to the Book of Hebrews, chapter twelve, there are fans in the stands watching us as we run our race. They are cheering us on as we get closer to the finish line. I can hear them shouting, "Run, run, don't quit, don't quit, the race is about over." Then up ahead, there stands the Lord of lords and King of kings waiting for us to cross the finish line! It will soon be worth it all when we run that last mile of the way! Keep on going! Don't stop now! Thousands are depending upon you! Amen, and Amen!

Session 5

“A Great Leader Must Have The Right Compassion”

Scripture: Luke 7:11-17

Introduction

As we come to this fifth session in our study of the characteristics of great leaders, we are going to deal with the subject of how **“Great Leaders Must Have The Right Compassion.”** Through all of my years of ministry, I have discovered that it is impossible for me to have passion for the ministry I am trying to do, unless I have genuine compassion within. And, I need to say that it is impossible to muster up compassion, but it has to come from within the heart and this will only happen as Jesus moves upon us to care and have concern for those to whom He has called us to minister. In other words, compassion in the heart and life of a leader comes from the Holy Spirit placing within our hearts what is in the heart of Jesus Christ for the lost world, and also for those who are hurting and suffering within this world. In the **Book of Jude, verse 22, the Bible says, “And of some have compassion, making a difference.”** This is what great leaders do! They have a God-given compassion within which gives them the drive and the passion to make a difference in the world in which they live.

In my years of study of the life of Jesus, I discovered that at least eight times, the Bible says that Jesus was moved with compassion toward those who needed to be saved, or those who were hurting from disease or other problems. If we study these several texts in depth, we will discover that what the Bible is saying is that Jesus was so filled with compassion for these needy people, that he was literally made sick on his stomach because of the needs of the people. This, my friends, is real compassion! When is the last time that you were moved to almost nausea because of the condition of those you were trying to reach, or because of the desperation of those who were hurting? I can tell you this, that when you have genuine heart felt compassion for these dear people, your ministry to them will be much easier and enthusiastic.

Today in this session, we are going to take a beautiful incident in the ministry of Jesus and see how He showed compassion, and hopefully, we will follow His example and get hold of the need for genuine compassion as we strive to be great leaders. So, let's get started with our study!

I. FIRST, WE NEED TO NOTICE THE PLACE WHERE JESUS DEMONSTRATED REAL COMPASSION. v. 11

I think that it is amazing that if we want to learn any lesson or principle for life, we only have to look at the pattern our Lord set, and we can find the lesson or principle. In this study we find that Jesus had been ministering in the seaside city of Capernaum and had just left that area the day before this event. He now starts on his way to the city of Nain several miles away from Galilee. As he approaches the city gate, a crowd of people was coming out with the dead corpse of a sixteen year old boy, who had just died. His mother was a widow lady, and now she had lost her only son. Her heart was broken and she was in total despair. As He approached the lady, Jesus told her to stop crying! He then touch the bier that the body was being carried on, and He spoke to the young man and said, **“Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!”** And the young man sat up and began to speak. Jesus took him down from the bier and presented him to his mother! Then, there was an awesome and reverential fear that fell upon the people, and they all began to glorify God. Jesus demonstrated a tremendous compassion for this young man and his mother, and we should follow His example and show compassion toward others as well. Let's now look at a few practical points about this place where Jesus demonstrated such compassion.

A. First, it was a public place. v. 11a

It was not by coincidence that Jesus came toward Nain this particular day, but truthfully, it was the sovereign plan of God for Jesus to pass by. He came in obedience to His Father, and the demonstration of His compassion changed the life of not only the dead boy, but it changed the lives of all of those that witnessed this beautiful miracle.

Sometimes when we are serving God, we argue with Him about the place where He has placed us to serve. Sometimes the place might seem insignificant, and a place which is not very important. But, I remind you that if all of us would just go where Jesus directs us, then he will provide the opportunity for us to demonstrate our compassion, even publicly so that many people will be touched by our efforts.

B. Secondly, it was a precious place. v. 11b

The name Nain means gracefulness! What a precious place it was for the grace of God to be shown to a weeping mother and her dead son. And, I can assure you that from that day forward, the gate of Nain city was a precious place to this lady, her son, her family, and to all of those who witnessed this marvelous miracle. And, I can assure you that when we go where God has directed us and demonstrate compassion to sorrowful and hurting people, that place will always be special to us and all others that have been a part of our ministry in that place. Isn't it wonderful just to ponder the fact that wherever we show compassion and minister to hurting people, there will always be a last memory for us and all others that have been participants with our ministry.

C. Thirdly, it was a populated place. v. 11c

In the last part of this verse, we discover that there was a large crowd of people with this widow lady as she was taking her son to his burial. This just simply tells me that sometimes we minister in a very private place, but other times we must show compassion in a very crowded place. If Jesus would have been like most of us, I think He would have asked the lady to take her dead son to a private house and there He would have raised him from the dead. But no, Jesus wanted the entire crowd to see the demonstration of God's love and miracle. We must never be intimidated by the large crowds, but if God gives us a large audience in which to demonstrate our compassion, we should take advantage of the opportunity and demonstrate God's grace and compassion. The more people who witness our genuine compassion for others, the more people that will be persuaded to follow Jesus if we have demonstrated His love with sincerity and the right motive.

II. SECONDLY, WE NEED TO NOTICE THE PROBLEM THAT REQUIRED THIS DEMONSTRATION OF REAL COMPASSION. v. 12

I do not believe that God is the author of all of the problems that we face in life, but I assure you that He allows them because if He did not, we would not have them. Therefore, when problems come our way, we should see them as opportunities to show compassion and mercy to others. Let's take a look at the real problem that Jesus faced outside the city of Nain, and let's look in this story for problems that we might help solve in our own communities and cities.

A. The problem included a dead man. v. 12a

The true fact was that this young man lying on the bier was truly dead and was on his way to the cemetery. All hope was gone and everyone was sad! Could I tell you that although we might not be faced with physically dead people lying all around us, yet, there are

thousands upon thousands of people around us that are spiritually dead and lost and are on their way to an endless grave in the abyss of hell. It is our responsibility to show compassion to these people and share the message of eternal life with them so that they can be set free from the bondage of spiritual death. I personally believe that the greatest thing on Jesus' heart is lost sinners. And, because He demonstrated His compassion and love for every sinner on the earth when He died on the cross, we too should be seeking His leadership to find those that we can offer the message of hope and eternal life. I ask you today, "How long has it been since you led someone to Jesus?" Better still, "How long has it been since you witnessed to someone and told them about Jesus?" It is not our responsibility to save them for we cannot, but it is our responsibility to share the Gospel and then draw the net. God gives the increase and provides the fish for us to catch. Have you been fishing a lot lately? I trust that you have!

B. The problem included a distraught mother. v. 12b

I don't think that we can even imagine how heart broken this dear mom was because of the passing of her only son. She had already lost her husband through death, and now the joy of her life was also dead. Her life was turned upside down, and her hopes for her son's life were gone.

Can you just try to imagine a little bit how her heart must have ached as she was taking the boy to bury him? Yet, in the midst of her personal despair, along came Jesus with real compassion and made an eternal difference. And so should we! If we are really saved, we have the precious love of Christ in our hearts, and like Paul said in II Corinthians, this love should be what constrains us to keep taking the message of salvation to a lost world. Great leaders are those who are filled with the compassion of Jesus for those that they are trying to reach, and those that they are trying to lead. You must become a person of empathy if you are really going to make a difference. Empathy is quite different from sympathy. Empathy means that you try to put yourself in the place of the suffering or hurting person, and then try to do something about alleviating that suffering. Sympathy means that you might recognize the suffering and hurt of someone, but you don't try to put yourself in their position and try to alleviate their pain. Thus, genuine compassion goes beyond casual observation like the priest and Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan, but it takes you and me to the wounded where we pitch in and try to help the person or persons in need regardless of the risks.

Now, do you know any hurting or suffering people that you should try to minister to? If so, why don't you start focusing today on how you can minister to that hurting or even lost person.

C. The problem also included a despairing crowd. v.12c

The marvelous thing about this beautiful story in the ministry of Jesus is that it draws our attention to this one young man and mother. Yet, there was a great crowd there that not only needed a good witness of the miraculous power of God, but they also had their own needs that needed to be met in and through Jesus Christ. Can we see the multitudes that need Jesus? Can we look around us and envision the lostness and despair of those without Jesus? I trust that we can, and I trust that we will. It is very likely that if we don't care, very few others will care. So, let's look for the crowd and their needs, but let's not overlook the dying individual within the crowds. Great leaders take a genuine interest in those around them, and especially in those they are trying to lead.

III. THIRDLY, WE NEED TO NOTICE THE PASSION THAT JESUS DEMONSTRATED TOWARD THIS YOUNG DEAD MAN AND HIS MOTHER. v. 13

I have already stated that it is impossible to have active passion in ministry unless there is real compassion in the heart. I need to also say that it is impossible to have compassion without it moving one to passion. So, in this story we see Jesus demonstrating his compassion by passionately acting to solve the problem. There would not be so many people in our churches who are so inactive, if there was more compassion in the hearts. Then, this compassion would move the people to action!

A. Notice first that this was a passion of observation. v. 13a

I really love this story because it reveals the fact that those who are filled with compassion will always be looking for places and people where they can demonstrate this compassion passionately. If you are really saved and you are not demonstrating kindness and compassion to others, it simply means that you are not observant and looking for places and people where you can show your compassion. I want to say it again that there has to be compassion before there is passion. And, it is only through the Holy Spirit and having the mind of Christ that you can have real compassion. So today, what are you thinking about? Are you compassionate or are you compassionless? Compassionate people have their eyes open looking for places and people to show their compassion.

B. Notice secondly that this was a passion of identification. v. 13b

Now we take one step further and mention that Jesus not only was looking for a need for His compassion, he went further and placed Himself in the shoes of this broken hearted mother and identified with her suffering. Who knows but maybe Jesus was thinking ahead to Calvary and the suffering of His mother, Mary, who would also have her heart broken because her first begotten son would die on that old rugged cross. Maybe this is why Jesus was so touched by this sad situation! But, for whatever the reason, we too should put ourselves in the place of the thousands of people in the world that are dying in sin, those that are hurting through starvation, deprivation, and disease, and we should look for a way to make a difference for these multitudes. Is your compassion really showing? I pray that it is!

C. Notice thirdly that this was a passion of consolation. v. 13c

After Jesus had observed the situation, identified with the suffering mother, He then reached out to touch the young man and raise him from the dead. It was common knowledge that no Jew was to touch a bier upon which a dead boy lay, and certainly not the body itself. Yet, Jesus went against all Jewish law and protocol to touch the young man's bier and body. Yet, this is typical Jesus refusing to be bound by law when grace is needed.

By the way, according to the Gospel of John, Jesus not only came to show compassion, but even when He returned to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to be our "paracletas" to come along side of us to show consolation and compassion. Therefore, if we are really servants like Jesus, then we will always be looking for places to show compassion. In **Isaiah 40:1, we find these words, "Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people, saith your God."** So, we know that God has always wanted His children to comfort and show pity to others. God commanded and Jesus demonstrated it! Thus, we are to also follow His glorious example!

IV. FOURTHLY, WE NEED TO NOTICE THE PRODUCTS OF THE COMPASSION THAT JESUS DEMONSTRATED. vs. 14-15

Why do we wear our selves out and sometimes even destroy our health trying to show love and compassion to scores of people that don't know us, and to others who don't even want to know us? The answer is that when Jesus Christ lives within our hearts, we can't help but desire that all people be made completely perfect in body, soul, and spirit. And although we can't do it ourselves, we can be the instrument that Jesus uses to help make people perfect and whole in all three areas of their lives. We are merely to be conduits through which God flows His compassion and changes the lives of thousands of people. Surely, great leaders would desire to be instruments of wellness in a sinful and sick society. And most of all, when people really get saved and become spiritually whole for ever, we will have the same amount of time to enjoy the fruits and products of our efforts.

In these next two verses, we will see some of the positive results of the compassion that Jesus demonstrated toward the widow's son from Nain, and we should be encouraged to demonstrate like compassion to others so that we can share in these same fruits through our efforts.

A. The first product included a personal touch. v. 14a

I have already mentioned that Jesus made this touch of the bier and probably the dead body of this young man. But yet, what a privilege it is for us to be instruments and tools through which Jesus touches other people's lives. I must tell you that I will never get over the thrill of simply being a servant and ambassador of the living Christ. In this New Testament day, Jesus Himself touched this young man, but now He has chosen to work through the lives and ministries of his people. Great leaders always will be vessels of compassion toward others, and Jesus will touch lives through these great leaders!

B. The second product included a perplexed team. v. 14b

In the second part of this verse 14, the Bible says, "**....and they that bare him stood still.**" This simply means that when Jesus touch the bier, the people stopped moving and watched to see what would happen next. Truthfully, they were taken by surprise that this Jewish man would come this near a dead body. So, this group of people stood still in a state of consternation to just watch what would happen.

I wish that I could have been there that day to watch the faces of these people that were carrying the body of this young man. It must have been absolutely a shock to them as I am sure it would have been to us as well. But, what a thrill to know that when Jesus touches people, the lost wicked world stands in utter amazement at the results. I just love the thought that when Jesus works, supposedly saint intellectually bright people stand back in amazement. Thus, I see this result as positive and somewhat humorous result of Jesus' compassion. If you want to see the world confounded, reach out in the name of Jesus with real compassion, and you will witness strange happenings before your very eyes. Let God's Holy Spirit show up in a church service and start moving mightily, and you will see people scared to death, confused, and even denying with their hearts what they are seeing with their eyes. May God give us compassionate leaders who exude the power touch of the Savior.

C. The third product included a powerful talk. v. 14c

And Jesus said, "**Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.**" Friends, that is powerful talk! Jesus spoke and the young man came to life right before their eyes. This is what the

world is waiting to see today. I don't mean they are waiting to see some miraculous resurrection from physical death, but they are waiting to see dead lives come to life and be transformed by the living and written Word of God that is used by compassionate leaders in the strong power of Jesus Christ. The world is tired of the same religiosity and formal orthodoxy. It is tired of the phony emotional crowds that declare miracles to have happened while showing no bonified evidence. What the world desires and begs for is the simple presentation of God's Word from and through genuinely compassionate people that results in dramatically changed lives that are even more dramatic than even a real physical resurrection.

D. The fourth product included a phenomenal triumph. v. 15

“And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak.” Yes, triumph had come to a dead lad and his broken hearted mother. Jesus had passed their way, and they would never be the same again. In about three years after this even, Jesus Himself would die and be placed in a borrowed tomb. Yet, He too would rise from the dead never to die again. This young man would have to die the second time, but not Jesus! Therefore, the story of this young man's resurrection was just a prototype of the coming resurrection of Jesus from the dead on the third day. And when Jesus did arise from the dead, it brought a phenomenal triumph to all of those who would believe. Now, we can live forever because Jesus arose from the dead!

Just think about the great triumph we shall witness when once we get to heaven and see all of the people that have passed from death into life because we have demonstrated the genuine love and compassion of Jesus to those who were spiritually dead. It will indeed be worth every problem and pain we have ever faced to be there with all of the resurrected saints from all of the ages. Praise God for the privilege we have of being a vital part of this miracle called the resurrection of the spiritually dead at the moment of salvation. No wonder I enjoy seeing people get saved!

V. FIFTHLY, WE NEED TO NOTICE THE PROCLAMATION OF THIS COMPASSION THAT JESUS DEMONSTRATED. vs. 16-17

As the result of this great miracle performed by our wonderful Lord through His compassion, people began to glorify God and spread the rumor that a young man who had been dead was now a live again. And they testified that God had surely visited His people.

Is this not what we need today? We need for people to see such powerful demonstrations of God's love through His people, that every where people go they will be talking about what happened at church last Sunday. Or, they need to be talking about old brother so and so that used to be a drunk, but during the revival meeting, he was completely changed. Then, there was old gossiping and profane Sally, who instantaneously got a new vocabulary and a personal discipline when she met Jesus over in the home where Bible study was being held! This is the kind of proclamation that needs to be coming from our churches and out of the homes of believers. Let's take a look at four points about this proclamation and glean the truth that God is trying to give us about showing compassion as great leaders.

A. First, notice the motive for this proclamation. v. 16a

In the first part of verse 16, the Bible tells us that fear fell upon all the people when they saw the resurrection of the dead boy. They suddenly were found in the presence of the righteous and Holy Son of God. They immediately knew that something was different about this man because He has just brought a boy back from the dead. Their motive for

telling everyone about this incident was reverential awe before a righteous Savior. This is what we need today. We need desperately to see such a move of God that the entire world will stand back and attest the fact that only God could have done this! The thing that is so missing in our lives and churches today is a Holy reverence for the Holy God. With no fear of God, people will do their own thing and act as if there is no God. So, the cry keeps coming, "Show us a demonstration of God's divine compassion and love. Show us that what you preach is in fact reality! And, may I say that it doesn't have to be a physical or organic miracle to attest and affirm the greatness of God, although God might choose to give one. The greatest miracle is the changed life that I referred to early in the text. Even as I write these words, I can vividly attest that God is real because I have seen Him work in great power and glory; not only here in America, but definitely in Africa where I have worked for so many years.

B. Secondly, notice the manner of this proclamation. v. 16 b

The people began to cry out loudly that God was to be glorified; that a great prophet had been in their midst. This was not a solemn low key proclamation. This was a loud enthusiastic proclamation! The people knew that something was indeed different about Jesus from all of the other religious teachers or rabbis. He had demonstrated not only His compassion, but also His great power.

What should we learn from these people? We should learn that when we proclaim the message of Christ that we should do it with passion and enthusiasm. We should do it with excitement and not with shame or embarrassment. We have the greatest story in the world to tell, and may God help us to not tell with such a non-enthusiastic way that no one will believe what we say or want what we have! Our message must be told with power, compassion, and with passion!

C. Thirdly, notice the message of the proclamation. v. 16 c

In this last phrase of verse 16, the Bible says that the people began to shout that God had visited His people. This is the kind of message that will change our world today. It has to be the message that God has shown up in power and great glory, and that lives have been brought back from the dead spiritually because Jesus came by. Jesus is already here in Spirit, but people will not see or hear Him until they see and hear Him demonstrated through the preaching and living of God's spiritually resurrected people. Great leaders must come to understand that compassion must be shown through them if they are to give credibility to what they are trying to teach as they lead.

D. Lastly, notice the magnitude of this proclamation. v. 17

The miracle had been performed, the people had been brought to a holy reverence before God, and now the testimony to what Jesus had done was spreading like wildfire. Why was this happening? Because the people had witnessed a real miracle of God's power through our compassionate Lord. People are still begging to see the manifested presence of God through compassionate people who are filled with God's Spirit. Can I tell you that people can recognize that which is genuinely from God, and that which is fabricated by religious pretenders. May God give us spiritual leaders who have genuine compassion coming from a heart of love and demonstrated in genuine acts of kindness in and through the power of the Holy Spirit. When this happens, it will be noised everywhere that Jesus is in town.

Conclusion

During this session we have studied somewhat in detail this great passage of scripture about our Lord's compassion in hopes that we will get a hunger for the same kind of compassion that He exuded. It is my prayer that everyone of you who are here today will have this kind of compassion. But, it is not going to happen if we don't spend time with Jesus fellowshiping with Him, and becoming His willing servants.

Remember the passage of scripture in Jude that I mentioned in the introduction to this session. **In Jude verse 22**, the Bible says, "**And of some have compassion, making a difference.**" May I just go so far to say that if you don't have compassion like Jesus, you will never make a difference. And great leaders are called upon to make a difference with and through the people they lead. Thus, if you are wearing yourself out trying to make a difference and are not, it probably is because you don't have genuine Holy Spirit compassion in your heart. And to quote John Maxwell from his book, "Developing The Leader Within You," page 134, he says, "Leaders must care for people before they can develop them." So, do you really care with a Godlike compassion and concern for those you are trying to lead? I have seen so many people try to become leaders who just don't like others, and then, some that just don't have any people skills whatsoever. If you don't have people skills and relate to others well, you will never become a leader. And, if you want to become a leader and you don't have people skills, you better do two things. First, you better get with Jesus and ask Him to cut off your rough edges which offend people so easily, and then, you better develop a personal agenda to help you improve your people skills. How can you lead others when you don't even like others? The truth is that you can't! And, as the Bible tells us in the Book of Proverbs, "If you are going to have a friend, you have to show yourself friendly." Lone Rangers don't like people and they are not team players. Instead, they develop a disdain for others and often talk or preach down to them. This usually comes from an insecure heart which is the result of some kind of abuse or neglect in the pretending leader's life. I want to say it again! If you don't like the people you are trying to lead, you are wasting your time and theirs! May God help us to allow the love of Jesus to fill our hearts so that in turn we may allow that same love to flow through us to others. In order to become great leaders, we must demonstrate compassion.

Session 6

“A Great Leader Must Have The Right Reaction To Accountability”

Scripture: Luke 16:1-15

Introduction

We now come to the last session in our leadership seminar. I believe that our study in this session is probably one of the most important subject matters that we could ever study if we are going to become great leaders. And, I would like to say that the subject matter of accountability is one of the most neglected, rejected, and refused of any principle that leaders are faced with today. So many people do not want to be held accountable for their actions, behavior, and assigned responsibilities. And, the tendency which most of us have is to get angry, develop resentment, and blame others if we are held accountable for our responsibilities. But, I can tell you this emphatically, “If you can't handle accountability for your actions and receive constructive criticism for your behavior and ministry responsibilities, you will never be a great leader. Through the years of my ministry, I have only had to dismiss a few people. And, that says a lot in over forty years of ministry. Yet, the truth is that the few that I have had to dismiss were let go because they just could not accept accountability for their ministry performance, and they could not handle constructive criticism. And, in going back to our study in session three on having the right attitude, I need to remind you that unless we have a teachable spirit, we will never accept accountability for anything we do. Thus, unless we have the spirit of a servant who respects the authority of the one over us, there is no way that we will ever accept accountability for our leadership responsibilities.

In this final session of our seminar, I want us to take a look at a much neglected passage of scripture and discover some principles about how to react to others holding us accountable for our leadership responsibilities. Some of you may have attended another staff seminar a few years ago in which I used this same passage of scripture, **Luke 16:1-15**, and talked about accountability. But during that seminar, I spent most of my time talking to you about accountability for handling money. This time, I want to go far beyond the handling of money and use the same passage to talk about how we should react to accountability in every area of our lives and leadership responsibilities. Sometimes we just need to stop and remember some other scriptures like **Proverbs 27:5**, where the Bible says, “**Open rebuke is better than secret love.**” Also, in **Ecclesiastes 7:5**, we find, “**It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.**” In other words, accountability may require a rebuke, but on the other hand, it may only require an accounting to make sure that the work has been carried out, the job has been finished, and the assignment has been performed. Therefore, to associate accountability with only rebuke may be totally wrong. Thus, once again, let me say that we must keep a teachable spirit when others try to hold us accountable for the jobs we have been assigned. So, today, in this final session, let's take a look at this scripture passage and learn some truths which God is trying to show to us. Just remember, accountability is vital to the success of any ministry or project, and to not hold people accountable is far less than God's plan for everyone of us who will be ultimately held accountable by God Himself for the work and ministry He has called us to. Now, let's open our hearts and get what we should learn from this study.

In this unique passage of scripture, Jesus presents a story about man who was the steward or governor over another man's possessions. It was the steward's responsibility to manage the possessions and property of his lord, and he was to make sure that his master's welfare and wealth was his primary consideration. In other words, he was not the owner, but he was to take care of, protect, and make sure

that everything his master owned and that for which he was accountable was to be taken care of, protected, and kept safe for his master. And, he was to make sure that his master's investments brought forth a good dividend, and that no one stole from his master in any way. Yet, it is obvious from this story that this steward had not done a good job, and that he had forgotten that the day of accounting was coming when his master would truly hold him responsible for that which was in his care. Thus, accusations were made by someone that the steward was wasting his master's goods, and that he was not doing a good job. So, when the master heard these accusations, he called for a meeting with the steward and held him accountable for his actions. It is obvious that the master must have given him a short time period to put everything in order, and then he would meet with him again. We might say that the steward was put on probation before he was to lose his job. Now, things really got serious.

Let's begin with the verse by verse exegesis and see what this man did, and especially how the lord approved his decisions, even when what he did was wrong. This is why this passage is so unique! It indicates that he was approved for his wisdom, although in his decision he did wrong. His wrong was not approved, but his wisdom was.

I. A GREAT LEADER WHO REACTS PROPERLY TO ACCOUNTABILITY LIVES WITH THE AWARENESS THAT THE DAY OF ACCOUNTING MAY BRING A REBUKING ACCUSATION. vs. 1-2

A. In this story the steward was accused of wasted money. v. 1

As I mentioned before, this story is basically about money, but let's go deeper than money today. Think about all of the blessings, the goods, the talents, the skills, and the opportunities that God has given to all of us. Have we used them wisely, or have we wasted them with wrong decisions and mismanagement? Let me ask you right now, "Have you wasted what God has given to you?" Have you been faithful in being a good steward over what God has called you to be and do for Him? Do you live your life and ministry every day in such a good way that you don't dread the day of accounting which you are going to face? I hope you do, but if not, maybe you need to take a personal inventory of your life and ministry and see if you are a wise steward.

B. In this story the steward was accused of worthless management. v. 2

I can think of nothing more serious on earth than to be called by God to a position of leadership and authority, and then be found guilty of mismanaging the position or place of authority that God has given to us. We must refuse to take casually our role and responsibilities as leaders under God's authority so that we will be faithful to our calling, and so that we will not have to stand ashamed before God. If we can't face the day of accounting before the people that God has put over us, how do we think that we will be able to stand before Jesus one day to give an account to Him? Folks, this is serious stuff that we are talking about. Why? Because there is the possibility that God might take away our stewardship responsibility and give it to another! God help us to not relinquish our God-given position as a steward because we have not reacted well to accountability.

II. A GREAT LEADER WHO REACTS PROPERLY TO ACCOUNTABILITY LIVES WITH THE AWARENESS THAT THE DAY OF ACCOUNTING MAY BRING A REVERENTIAL ANXIETY. v. 3

Let me tell you something! It is much better to fear God and the ones He has placed over us with a respectful fear than it will be to lose our position, and then be brought down to a place of humiliation where we will fear God and those over us out of a heart of real fear. Forced fear is not a good thing. Therefore, let's surrender our will to God's will and humble ourselves before the Lord

and those over us lest we one day be forced to bow in humble submission because we have been poor stewards.

A. This steward had anxiety because of the possible loss of his position. v. 3a

In this verse three, we find that the steward really began to ponder deep down in his heart what was about to happen. He suddenly came to realize that he was about to be out of a job! Maybe he was too old to go to work in some other role, or maybe his pride would not allow him to beg, but he knew one thing for sure. That was that if he did not get his house in order, he was about to lose every thing, including his source of income, his respected position, his ability to take care of his family, and everything else.

B. This steward also had anxiety because of the power level of his pride. v. 3b

So, deep within the recesses of his proud heart, he concocted a plan that he felt sure would cause his master to go light on him and even commend him because he was going to collect some money from delinquent people who owed his master some funds. He came up with the plan, but even with this new plan, his motives were not right. Why? Because he was only thinking about himself and who would take care of him. Yet, when his master discovered what he had done, he did indeed commend this unjust steward for making provision for his future; something that a lot of professing believers don't do in view of eternity.

III. A GREAT LEADER WHO REACTS PROPERLY TO ACCOUNTABILITY LIVES WITH THE AWARENESS THAT THE DAY OF ACCOUNTING MUST BRING FORTH A RESOLVED ACTION. vs. 4-7

It is one thing to know that you have been a poor steward of what belongs to someone else, it is another thing to take some quick action to make sure that your poor stewardship doesn't cost you everything. So, in this story we find this poor steward making a quick decision to try to make everybody happy. First, if he only asked those who owed his master to pay half of what they owed, this would make them happy. And, if his master could collect even half of what was owed him, this would be better than nothing. Therefore, he made a quick decision. Let's look at his action and see what we can learn.

A. His action was impudent. v. 4

In verse four we learn that this poor steward's action was defiant and disrespectful. He was totally disrespectful of his master, but by now, he was only concerned with what would happen to himself. So, he went against all integrity and came up with an illegal plan to try to protect himself. May I say right here, that usually the reason that most people don't accept accountability for their behavior and actions is because of their selfish and proud ambitions. I have seen this over and over in the realm of Christian people who are trying to serve as leaders. Up until this point, this poor steward was not doing a good job, and he was negligent toward taking care of responsibilities. So, when he knew that the day of accounting was coming, he just made a defiant decision to do something, even if it was wrong. Why? Because all he could think about was himself!

Let me mention right here that at this time in most stories is where the negligent person begins to blame others for his failures. But, since there was no one else to blame, he needed to come up with some selfish plan regardless if it was an evil plan.

B. His action was impulsive. v. 5

In this verse, the unjust steward decided to implement his unethical plan. He called one of his lord's debtors and asked him to tell him how much he owed his master. At this point in the story, this sinning man decides to appeal to the sinful and selfish heart of the debtor to join him in the conspiracy to defraud the lender of the money. Could I just tell you that people who start out reacting improperly to accountability usually end up dragging others into their sin trying to get someone to assist them in their defiance. When a person refuses to accept accountability or constructive criticism, that person usually ends up resorting to bringing others into the situation to assist or defend him in his rebellion. When a man is captivated by fear as this unjust steward was, he reacts impulsively rather than stopping and contemplating the ultimate end of his decision. Decisions made on impulse and at a time of emotional upheaval usually are wrong decisions.

C. His action was improper. vs. 6-7

In verses 6-7, this unjust steward started carrying out his concocted plan so that he would have somebody that would feel obligated to him in case he lost his job and means of support. I would call this manipulation or expected pay for play as we have heard a lot about in America recently. And, we see this all the time here in Africa. If a politician gets elected, he usually rewards those who have helped him get elected, no matter how corrupt and vile his supporters may be. The deed of this unjust steward was wrong and sinful, but his actions were wise in view of the future. Now, let me ask you again, "How do you react to someone in authority holding you accountable?" Your answer will reveal whether you are on the way to becoming a great leader.

IV. A GREAT LEADER WHO REACTS PROPERLY TO ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THE RARE APPROVAL IN THIS PASSAGE. vs. 8-9

Sometimes it would be easy for us to excuse our wrong behavior based upon the principles that God is trying to show us from this passage. Why is this true? Because if we see God putting His approval upon bad and sinful behavior, we might get the idea that it is quite okay for us to continue to do evil. But no, this is not what Jesus is trying to teach us. Instead He is trying to teach us that the preparation that this unjust steward made was wise because he looked to the future and was concerned about what would happen on his day of accountability.

What about you? Have you stopped to realize that God is going to hold all of us accountable for our ministries and our service? Do you understand that accountability to the one over us is just a small thing in light of our future and impending judgment by the One Who saved us? Therefore, we must develop the attitude of a servant and respond with gracious acceptance to those who try to hold us accountable for our behavior. Great leaders become great leaders by learning to be great followers! Let us take a look at these two verses and see what God is trying to teach us about this rare approval that the master gave his unjust steward.

A. First, we need to see that this man was approved for his prudence. v. 8

As long as I live, I will never be able to understand why Jesus put His approval upon this poor steward's actions, but I do accept the lesson that he is trying to teach us. He wants us to realize that there is always a day of accounting for all of our actions and deeds, and when we have squandered our opportunities and the substance which has been placed within our care, we need to do something to prepare us for the ultimate day of accounting. So, the man was foolish because he was a deceiver, but he was wise because he at least saw the probability that he might lose his position as a steward, and

so he prepared for the future with this decision.

Could I please ask you about your reaction to accountability? When you are held accountable for your service, your management, and your responsibilities, do you get angry, or do you come up with a good plan to help you face the uncertainty of the future? I pray that you have learned that it is far better to accept accountability here and now, rather than take the chance of losing everything in the future when you stand before Jesus!

B. Secondly, we need to see that this man was approved for his preparation. v. 9

In this verse Jesus told His disciples that we better use the money and possessions which He has given to our care in such a way that we will be taken care of in the future. Have you ever thought about how much money is wasted in this world as people use God's gifts only for themselves? We need to remember that everything here is so temporary, and will only last for a short while. And, if we are blessed even to live until we are one hundred, a hundred years is a short time in view of eternity. Therefore, we should be wise and use what God entrusts to us to bring men to Christ and lay up treasure in heaven. And, please remember that we are not laying up treasure in heaven unless we are investing in the only thing that is going there, and that is the souls of men. Do you have much treasure on the other side?

V. THE GREAT LEADER WHO REACTS PROPERLY TO ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDS TO BE AWARE THAT THE DAY OF ACCOUNTING BRINGS FORTH A REALISTIC ANALYSIS. VS. 10-12

What am I saying in this fifth point? I am saying that if we really live our lives the way we should, we will live in view of the fact at the day of accounting, everything will be revealed just as it is with no sham or pretense. In other words, we will live each day knowing fully well that truth will always prevail and all hypocrisy will be exposed. This should keep us on our guard to make sure that we are genuine and authentic. In verses 10-12, we are going to study briefly a great principle by which we should operate our lives. Let's look at these verses and see what God is trying to teach us.

A. We should live with the understanding that on the day of accounting, truth will be revealed.
v. 10

What Jesus is saying in this verse is if we can't be trusted with small things, we will never receive larger things. This is true about money, about our positions, our jobs, and almost every area of our lives. In fact, this goes all the way to our first session when we talked about integrity. If we can't be leaders of integrity when we are in small positions, God will not give us greater opportunities. And, it is only people of integrity that welcome scrutiny and accountability from superiors. Those who have failed to be honest are the ones that have something to hide. Just remember, the truth will always come out regardless of the situation.

B. We should live with the understanding that on the day of accounting, it will disclose what we really trust. vs. 11-12

These are two great verses. They tell us that if we can't be trusted with another man's items or money, God will not give us our own because we will probably squander that as well. The knowledge that we shall always be held accountable for what we do with that which God gives us should help us to use whatever He has given to us wisely. And, may I say that if we have done a good job of using and caring for that which has been given

to us by others, we will not have to react angrily in the presence of those who hold us accountable. Only guilt ridden people who have not done what they should with that which they have been entrusted will be embarrassed on the day of accounting. Great leaders must learn to react to accountability properly. And actually, leaders who have been faithful and done well will not dread accountability!

VI. A GREAT LEADER WHO REACTS PROPERLY TO ACCOUNTABILITY WILL REVEAL THE OBJECT OF HIS AFFECTION AND RESPECT. vs. 13-15

Now we come to the last point in this great study. And these last few verses are great verses teaching us some valuable truth. Let's take a look at these final three verses and see what God is trying to show us about the proper reaction to accountability.

A. In verse 13, we are told that where we place our affection and respect is our personal choice.
v. 13

In this verse Jesus tells His disciples that it is up to them to choose whom they will serve and what they will do with what God loans them. He states that they can not serve two masters, but that they have to choose to whom they will give their allegiance. And so it is with us today. If you are working with someone that you can't give your allegiance and loyalty to, you need to resign and find you another master. Because you will never be a great leader until you can whole heartedly support, respect, trust, and accept his or her accountability gladly. Everyone must have accountability, but is is up to the individual how he or she will respond to this accountability. People who are never held accountable for their behavior and actions, will just go on making the same mistakes and committing the same errors that they have been making and committing for a long time. Therefore, today would be a good day for us to make a resolution that we will change our attitude toward accountability and start welcoming it, rather than defying or rejecting it.

B. In verses 14-15, we are told that where we place our affection and respect is the proof of whom we are trusting. vs. 14-15

Whom do you trust more than any person in the universe? To whom are you really loyal and respectful? If you are going to be a great leader, you must define and redefine who it is that you are going to trust, to be loyal to, and to follow his or her leadership. So, let me ask you today, "Do you respect the people over you in authority?" Are you loyal to them even when they do hold you accountable for your responsibilities? Do you view them with love and respect, even though you might not agree with every decision they make? Are you sincerely committed to becoming a great leader, even to the point of accepting some stinging criticism when it doesn't feel good? If you can truly handle accountability, you are on your way to becoming a great leader! Please don't try to excuse your behavior or blame others like the Pharisees did when they were held accountable? You should never have a conceited and condescending attitude toward your masters, even if you disagree with their choices and decisions. To do so, will ultimately cause you to be totally disrespected by others, and I assure you that no one will want to follow you.

Conclusion

We now come to the end of this two day and six session seminar on "**Some Characteristics Of Great Leaders.**" We have primarily covered six traits of great leaders starting with integrity and ending up with the trait of accepting accountability. Now, the question is, "What are you going to do with the information you have received in our study? Will you take this information home and apply it in your daily lives and ministries, or will you just shrug your shoulders and say you have enjoyed the fellowship, and then go on

back living and conducting your ministries as you have always done. **Someone said a long time ago “If you think you are a leader and no one is following you, you are merely taking a walk.”** Therefore, stop to ponder this idea. Do you have anyone following you, or are you living and working by yourself?

The tendency that we all have is to do our own ministries, go on serving God and get old in the process while failing to prepare for someone to take our place when we cannot longer do what we are doing. If you don't care about your ministry after you are dead and gone, you have been in your ministry for the wrong reason! You have lived and worked saying that you were serving God, but in fact, you were serving self for whatever reasons. Maybe you were trying to gain the acceptance and approval of your friends or family! Or, maybe you were trying to impress people with how much you know and how hard you can work. Maybe you just enjoyed what you have done, but you really don't care about those who will come after you. Well, if this is your attitude, you need to go back and see why Jesus prepared 12 disciples to carry on His work after He would be gone! You also need to see Barnabus teaching and training Paul so that he could take over for him. Then, there was Elijah preparing Elisha to take over for him once he left for heaven. So, all of us should have the attitude that we want to replace ourselves with those who will stay faithful, also become good leaders, and then even training the future generations to keep on in the service of our Lord until Jesus comes again. To have the attitude that you don't care what happens after you are gone is totally unbiblical and I believe very selfish and sinful! I pray that all of us will get busy becoming great leaders, and then train a younger generation to become great leaders as well. The Kingdom of God is at stake, and we must give God our very best so that scores and scores of people will come into the Kingdom of God while we are yet here, and then also even after we are gone!

Let me close our seminar by thanking you for making the effort to be here for our two days together. I pray that God has blessed you, and I sincerely pray that your life will not be the same from this day forward. I also pray that God will give you journeying mercies as you travel home. Please know that we love you, and we sincerely thank you for the great part you play in the ministry of Gateway International Missions, Inc. We are very proud to have you a part of our team!

In the King's service,

Dr. Stan Frye
President of GIMI
Romans 10:13

