

DR DIRK H

MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

A
PRACTICAL
GUIDE TO
BECOMING
A WORLD
CHANGER

BOOK - 8
LEVEL
LEADER

ENGLISH

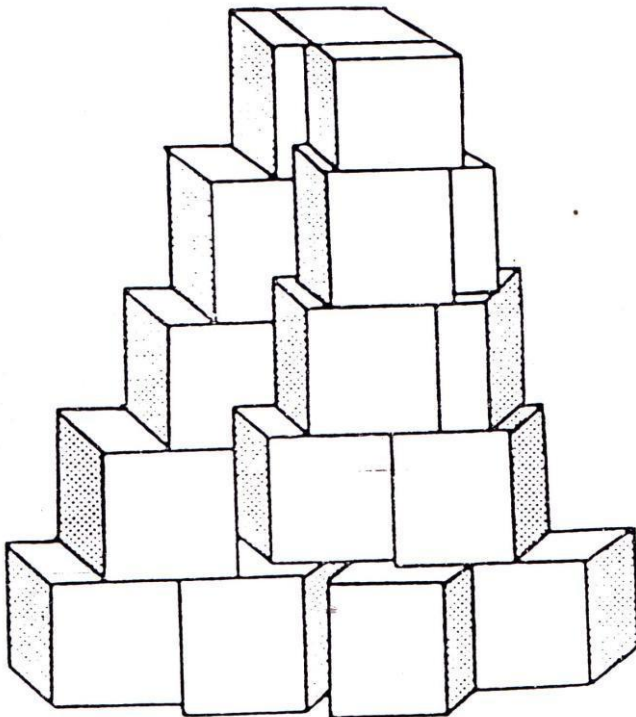
MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

Level:

LEADER

Study book no: 8

LEVELS:



5. Minister

4. **Leader**

3. Cell or Group leader

2. Disciple

1. Beginner

Bible Study Course to grow to spiritual maturity making every believer in Christ a minister and to increase in effective and efficient ministry!!!

Easy to use for self-study as well as to teach others!!!

MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

PURPOSE:

TO KNOW HIM, THE ONLY TRUE GOD

(Growing / Maturing)

Josh. 1 : 8, "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success."

II Pet. 3 : 18, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

II Tim. 1 : 15, "Study to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

Col. 1 : 27b - 28, "Christ in you, the hope of glory, Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ."

AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN TO OTHERS!

(Multiplying / Reproducing)

II Tim. 2 : 2, "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

II Tim. 3 : 16 - 17, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Eph. 2 : 10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

II Pet. 1 : 8, "For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

PRINCIPLE: "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things!" (Rom. 11: 36)

(INCREASING IN KNOWLEDGE; MATURING IN CHARACTER; USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS)

INDEX Study book no: 8

	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
- How to become a successful Christian leader (14 Chapters)	1,053
A Biblical perspective of success	
Principles of effective Christian leadership	
Having the right motive	
Laying a good foundation - character, gifting and personality	
Counting the cost of leadership	
Some important aspects of leadership	
The spiritual life of a leader	
Inter-personal relationships	
Decision making	
The art of delegation	
Harnessing the will to win	
Gift and talent ministries	
Overcoming stress and avoiding burnout	
The leader's reward	
- The heart qualifications of leadership	1,128
- The heart of a leader and the need for self-evaluation	1,141
- Qualifications of a true Christian leader	1,144
- Leadership under Christ – responsibilities and qualifications	1,148
- Christian leadership qualities / Self-evaluation questionnaire	1,151
- Spiritual leadership and the vital importance of self-leadership	1,156
- Leadership principles of Paul (based on a study of Second Corinthians)	1,162
- Insights on leadership from Paul – different kinds of qualifications	1,166
- Understanding Biblical spiritual authority (8 Chapters)	1,170
(1) Kingdom authority	
(2) Counterfeit spiritual authority	
(3) Shield against witchcraft	
(4) The Jezebel spirit	
(5) The control spirit and legalism	
(6) Systematic attacks of witchcraft	
(7) The modern Pharisees	
(8) Our greatest power and enemy	

HOW TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL CHRISTIAN LEADER

Chapter One - A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SUCCESS

“This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8). The word “success” occurs only once in the Bible. It is the Hebrew word “*sakal*”, which means: to have understanding, to be made wise, and to achieve good success. God promised Joshua good success if he would faithfully follow His instructions. It is obvious in the book of Joshua, that God fulfilled His Word and granted to Joshua the success he was promised.

The Hebrew word which best expresses the success which Joshua achieved through God’s help, is “*Yaresh*”. It occurs in Josh. 13:12, “for these did Moses strike and cast out.” (“*Yaresh*”). It means: to occupy, by casting out the previous inhabitants and possessing their place. To drive out, expel, destroy and disinherit them. To seize upon their inheritance and utterly possess it. To impoverish one’s enemies by seizing and possessing their possessions. Obviously this included possessing the land and the cities of Canaan, and the possessions of the previous inhabitants. But the success he achieved was not measured only by the material possessions he and the Israelites inherited, but by the fact that they achieved the purpose which God had ordained for them.

Success, from the Biblical perspective, means much more than attaining material prosperity, or achieving fame or wide recognition. It also means much more than all the definitions the dictionary contains, such as accomplishment, achievement, attainment, prosperity, mastery, and victory. From the Biblical perspective, success is only success when God’s purpose for our lives is fully accomplished.

Success, from a Biblical perspective means:

Finding and fulfilling God’s purpose for your life.

To become the person God wants you to be, for time and eternity.

To win God’s ultimate approval and commendation.

The book of Joshua teaches us that all this involves overcoming, defeating, and casting out the old inhabitants, and populating the land with new inhabitants. This represents the overcoming and casting out of old attitudes, thought patterns, concepts and habits, and the establishing of new ones. This process is achieved largely by consistent and constant meditation in the Word of God and a constant positive confession and enactment of all that is imbibed.

The current emphasis on success in some areas of the Church has polarised Christian opinion on the issue. There are widely divergent views on the subject and attitudes range from one extreme to the other. So we have some churches and ministries which are dubbed “hyper-faith”, and others which have gone to the other extreme, in which there is an almost complete denial of the power of faith.

Truth is always contains a balance and if we allow ourselves to be pushed to either extreme we are likely to get into error. A balanced view is the healthy and Biblical perspective. This does not only apply to the matters we are currently discussing. It is true in respect of most ideas and doctrines. Some Christians have become so wary of the success emphasis that they have backed right away from it, adopting a negative attitude which almost precludes from accomplishing anything beyond the mediocre. We need to remember that the ultimate alternative to success is failure, and probably the best we can expect if we do not attain success is mediocrity. Mediocre means average, middling, ordinary. In the pattern of life on the whole it would seem that of all people:

10% are successful,
10% are failures, and
80% are average, or mediocre.

Which of these three do you believe is God’s Will for your life? Where do you like to fit in?

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS “BAD SUCCESS”?

Since God promised Joshua “good success”, we may wonder if there is such a thing as bad success? I believe the answer is Yes! I believe the evidence of bad success lies all around us in the form of broken dreams, broken lives, and broken marriages. I believe there are basically three ways in which a person may be “successful”, yet their success is bad success.

Achieved at the expense or hurt of others.

The road to success is often a highly competitive one, and for everyone who succeeds there are many who fail, frequently as a by-product of the success of the achievers. I have seen marriages and families broken as a result of the relationship being sacrificed in the pursuit of success.

When one’s character is damaged in the process.

Sometimes, in the process of attaining “success”, one’s moral principles and ethics are severely challenged and frequently compromised. The business world is so filled with corruption that it often takes resources of character to be involved and yet retain honesty and integrity. If success is attained at the cost of your integrity, then it is certainly too expensive and is definitely NOT success as far as God is concerned.

c: Which does not have lasting results.

The success of this world is one that only lasts for this life. Some of the most “successful” persons of this life will be paupers and failures in eternity. True success is that which invests for eternity as well as in this short life. The Bible says, “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (Prov. 14:12).

SUCCESS BEGAN WITH A WORD FROM GOD.

Joshua’s success began with the words God spoke to him as recorded in Joshua 1:1-9. God challenged him by speaking His purpose into his life. Since success consists of finding and fulfilling God’s purpose, the quest for it begins when God reveals to that person His specific Will for their life.

When we first meet Joshua he is:

- Young.
- Inexperienced and immature.
- Inadequately prepared for leadership responsibilities.
- Over-shadowed by Moses.

But he was also:

- A true servant to Moses. (Hebrew: "*Ebed*" - meaning: a slave)
- A diligent follower of Moses. Num. 1:16, 26, 28.
- A keen observer of Moses.
- Obedient to Moses.

God usually speaks to those who are “seeking” Him.

“Seek and you will find, ask and you shall receive, knock and it shall be opened to you.” (Matt. 7:7). God rarely intrudes into the life of a person who is not earnestly seeking Him and desiring to hear from Him. He says, “And you shall seek Him and you shall find Him, when you shall search for Him with all your heart.”

God’s Will for your life is the most important thing in life. If you do not know what God has desired for you to accomplish in life, you should begin to earnestly seek Him in prayer until you know what He has purposed for you.

Occasionally, God speaks in an audible voice.

In Bible days God frequently spoke to people in an audible voice. Today this phenomena is far less frequent, probably because we have the written Word of God to a far greater degree than did people in Bible days. Of course God can still speak audibly and does so on occasions, but usually in somewhat extreme and dramatic circumstances.

Sometimes He may speak through a vision or dream.

Visions and dreams are not restricted to Bible days. God can and does still speak through this means. The primary difference between a vision and a dream is that a vision occurs while one is awake, a dream comes while they are sleeping. Through these media God conveys truth through scenes and pictures. This is a very colorful and dramatic way in which God frequently speaks through symbols and allegories. However, it is often a prophetic medium which needs interpretation.

The kind of vision of which I am speaking is supernaturally given. It usually occurs during a period of prolonged prayer and waiting on God. It can happen within one's mind, or it may happen externally, in which case the recipient observes and listens to it as though it were being played out before them. The interpretation will usually come through a time of prayerful waiting on God, but sometimes outside assistance is required to interpret, or to confirm the interpretation. When God speaks in a prophetic way, it is always wise to seek confirmation from other prophets. (1 Cor. 14:26-33).

God usually speaks through the Bible.

The most frequent way in which God speaks today is through His Word, the Bible. The Holy Spirit quickens or emphasises something from the Word to our spirit. We may be reading the Bible when this occurs, or the Holy Spirit may simply bring the Scripture to our remembrance. Either way the particular Scripture suddenly comes alive and God applies it to our understanding. God can convey amazing detail to us in this way. Scriptures that we felt we "knew" suddenly assume a much stronger relevance and significance. By speaking through His Word God can clearly emphasise divine principles in the message He conveys to us.

Revelation usually flows gently through our thoughts.

When God speaks to us through His Word it is not usually in a dramatic fashion but in a gentle distillation. His revelation drops gently into our spirit, "as the morning dew comes to the earth." It normally comes with gentle, quiet, insistence, filtering through our sub-conscious thoughts, and into our understanding. Such revelation can usually be further conveyed and received through spiritual dialogue, when our spirits commune with God's Spirit. In a humble and inoffensive manner we can interrogate God's Spirit, and He will answer us and enrich our understanding of God's Will.

This method of revealing things seems so natural that we may question whether or not it is actually God who is speaking to us, or simply some flight of imagination. But the things which God reveals in this manner become the proof that God is indeed speaking with us. Suddenly, we are in possession of facts and knowledge that we had no natural means of knowing. Such knowledge is often a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom which God has imparted by His Spirit.

Accompanying circumstances will confirm the leading.

Once God has spoken to us and we began to move forward in obedience to the revelation, circumstances fall together to confirm that we are doing the right thing. This will not happen until we actually start to move by faith. As we begin to move forward in obedience, God commences to confirm His leading by allowing positive circumstances to develop in harmony with His Will. For example, He will send the resources we need for a particular task. We may start out without any human guarantees of support, but God will supernaturally undertake and supply the necessary provisions as a clear indication that we are moving in His purpose.

GOD SPOKE TO JOSHUA. It was a:

Personal word.

God spoke to Joshua directly, not through a third party. There are often people who feel they have received a word for you. Beware of such words. If God wants to speak to you, He can do so without a third party. A prophetic word through another person usually comes as a confirmation of what God has already spoken into your heart.

There are occasions when God sends someone to speak a word to us but this is usually when for some reasons we are not hearing God for ourselves, or are even resisting God's purpose. (e.g. king David and Nathan).

It was a specific and practical word.

God's word to Joshua made immediate sense. It was not vague or abstract, but extremely clear and well defined. It told Joshua exactly what God wanted him to do, how to do it, and what the results would be. Joshua was immediately able to begin obeying God and as a result he saw tremendous victories take place such as the conquest of Jericho and Ai, and the whole land of Canaan.

Some people seem to get very complicated instructions from God that they are never able to put into practice. The "word" they receive is so super-spiritual and complicated that it never evolves into anything objective and practical.

It was a conditional word.

Most of the promises that God gives are conditional. Certain conditions must be met to make them operative and bring them to pass. The most obvious condition is faith. "With faith it is impossible to please God and whoever comes to Him must believe that He is God, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11:6).

But there were other conditions too, most of which related to Joshua's attitude towards God's Word.

He must meditate in it day and night. – visualisation and meditation.

It should not depart from his mouth. – verbalisation.

He must do all that is written in it. – actualisation.

He must be strong and courageous to obey it.

He should not be afraid or discouraged.

A further condition was that God would only give him the places on which the soles of his feet had trodden. (Joshua 1:3) Joshua had to press forward by faith into the Promised Land. He had to actually march forward in faith, and it was not until he had placed his feet on a certain piece of territory that God gave it to him. He was claiming territory by faith as he set his feet upon it in God's Name.

God's conditions called for obedient action from Joshua and the Children of Israel. Many times they were outnumbered by their enemies who frequently held natural advantages over the Israelites. But God honoured their faith and obedience and granted them victory and conquest. Gradually, piece by piece, they entered and possessed their inheritance.

COMING OUT OF YOUR WILDERNESS.

God often commences His work during our wilderness experiences. In a dry and barren period of our life when nothing seems to be going right, or in a place where our dreams seem to have been buried beneath the blistering desert sands.

This was certainly true of Moses. After forty years in the courts of Pharaoh, enjoying all the advantages which rank and wealth could afford, he found himself in the "backside of the desert." Trudging through the desert day after day he could no longer imagine that his life would ever amount to anything again. But God was with him in his wilderness and lit a fire within his spirit which would never be extinguished. Many of God's great leaders emerged from the wilderness to discover and fulfill the purpose of God for their life.

I think that God meets us in our wilderness so that as His purposes develop in our life we may always remember that when He began to work out His wonderful purposes within us we were in the "backside of the desert," in a dry and barren place. This reminds us that any glory that may accrue from the outworking of His purposes belongs exclusively to Him!

Until God begins to work out His specific plans for our lives, life is frequently like a wilderness, dry, barren, and unproductive. But He can make the desert blossom and turn the wilderness into springs of water.

As I was with Moses, so shall I be with you. (Josh. 1:5)

Moses was a very unlikely candidate for the leadership of Israel. He had an extremely low self-image, he was a very poor orator, he lacked self-confidence and was full of excuses as to why he would not be the right person to lead the Israelites from bondage to their Promised Land.

The fact that God was able overcome all these obstacles and make Moses such an effective leader must surely have encouraged Joshua enormously. It should be a tremendous encouragement to every aspiring leader. If God could make a great leader out of Moses, He could also do it for Joshua. If He could do it for Joshua, He can do it for YOU.

Jesus is THE SAME forever.

One of the most inspiring Scriptures in the New Testament is, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Heb. 13: 8. This Scripture is frequently used to encourage people to believe God for healing, reminding them that Jesus who healed people in Bible days, is the same Jesus today and will still heal the sick. Whilst not wishing to deny or discredit this emphasis I want to draw your attention to the fact there is nothing in the context to connect this statement to healing. In fact, the previous verse relates to Christian leaders who were exemplary for their leadership skills and conduct. Paul is exhorting the believers to emulate the fine example of their leaders, and adds, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever”, inferring that he Christ who made their leaders such exemplary ones, could also do the same for them.

"YOU" WILL MAKE YOUR WAY PROSPEROUS.

Although it is God who prospers us and makes us successful, there is also a human aspect to the process. There are certain things that we must do in order to make the process work. Joshua was instructed to prepare to possess the land.

Making an inventory.

Every person has untapped resources. Gifts and talents which have never been fully utilised. The whole potential that you need to become the leader God has ordained you to, is in you now. Some of it is in the form of latent abilities that the Holy Spirit will stir up and develop. Other aspects are in the form of right attitudes which God will seek to foster in you. The greatest potential is in the form of “**Christ in you**” –the presence of Christ’s Spirit within you, which God will develop until it possesses your whole being and shapes your life and character. Remember that your are complete in Christ. Col. 2:10.

The Spirit of Christ is within you, He has been living there since you first surrendered your life to Him in repentance and faith. But there is also a lot of YOU in there too which needs to be brought into submission to the Spirit of Christ in you. The major factor of God’s purpose in you, as He develops your leadership potential, is to change you into the image of His Son. **The leader who is not growing up into the image of Christ is not fulfilling the real purpose of God’s calling!**

We are living in that prophetic period when the “sons of God shall be revealed.” The time for which the whole creation has been groaning in travail is rapidly getting closer. Before this happens God is going to produce and manifest a body of believers who genuinely reflect the image of Christ. An army of believers who will be the very presence of Jesus in the earth. The Body of Christ today is desperately in need of Christ-like leaders on whose lives the believers can pattern themselves. This is far more important than having a powerful presence, strong administrative skills, or a charismatic personality.

Make a positive appraisal of your God-given potential.

“His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to glory and virtue.” (1 Pet. 1:3). Most believers need to have a thorough, positive, Biblically based appraisal of who and what they are in Christ. The Church has produced enough failures through its over-emphasis on sin and our fallen human nature. It has condemned men and women to grovel (abase oneself) in constant acts of penance, and to try to work out their own salvation by good works. It is time to see what God says. To imbibe what He has to say about the New Creation, and to walk in the light of His redemptive Word.

Potential leaders in particular, need to make a positive appraisal of their latent leadership skills. They need to realise that if God has called them into a leadership role it is because He knows they have that potential. If, like Joshua, they will “do according to all that is written in the book”, then God will prosper their development and give them good success.

Instead of majoring on our limitations and inabilities we must be vitally conscious of:

God’s grace.

His mercy and goodness.

That we are gloriously forgiven.

We are reconciled and justified.

We have been made the righteousness of God in Christ.

We are now the children and the sons of God.

We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ to do good works.

We are ordained and authorised members of His Kingdom.

We have been translated out of darkness, into His glorious light.

Out of confusion into divine revelation.

Out of uncertainty into quite confidence.

Out of fear into faith.

Out of our inability into His creative ability.

Using what you have.

God asked Moses, “What is that in your hand?” (Ex. 4:2). Moses said, “It’s a rod”. Just a plain simple rod. An ordinary branch of a tree. It did not appear to be anything that God could use in some great way. But God had great plans that involved that simple rod. Moses would soon discover what God could do through that simple rod and some faith and obedience.

You may not seem to have much in your hand. You are an average, ordinary person without great charisma or talent, but if you will totally surrender what you have to God, only He knows what the possibilities can be.

You have God-given abilities that may still be hidden.

You must recognise and acknowledge them.

Begin to train and develop them.

Go through every door that God opens for you.

Understand that God made you just as you are. He knows you far better than you even know yourself. He is totally aware of your limitations as well as your strengths, yet He has ordained you to be a leader amongst His people. You are unique. There is no one else just like you. You can do something for God that no one else can do. In His wisdom and for acknowledge He has chosen you and ordained you to bring forth fruit in your leadership capacity. He has ordained for you, “good works that you should walk in”. (Eph. 2:10).

God has also ordained you to achieve good success in your leadership role. As you humbly follow the leading of His Spirit in everything you do, God will make your leadership effective and successful. As you humbly depend on Him, recognising that anything worth-while and of eternal value, can only be accomplished by God as He works through you. Place yourself completely at His disposal. Dedicate your life afresh to His purposes. Determine by His grace to be everything that He has ordained you to be and to accomplish everything He has determined for you to accomplish. For then He will make your way prosperous, and then He will give you GOOD SUCCESS!

Chapter Two - PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Effective leadership is a major key to achievement, effectiveness, and success in every area of life. This is as true in the Church as in any other realm.

This study is intended to help Christian leaders to further develop their natural, spiritual, and acquired leadership skills. It deals with spiritual aspects of leadership, and with the development of leadership skills. God is presently training leaders in preparation for a world-wide harvest and for the emergence of His Kingdom. He is seeking to prepare them in character, obedience and authority.

THE CRUCIAL NEED FOR GOOD LEADERSHIP

A. WITHOUT GOOD LEADERSHIP, LAWLESSNESS ABOUNDS.

Judges 17:6; 18: 1-19. "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

WITHOUT LEADERSHIP, CONFUSION REIGNS.

THE PEOPLE ARE LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD.

SOME DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP:

One who takes the lead and goes ahead to show the way.

A leader must be able and willing to get out in front of the people and lead the way. This takes initiative, courage, and faith. Someone has said, "You will never get your head above the crowd unless you are willing to stick your neck out."

One who guides, directs, and commands a company.

A leader can never be an isolationist. He is part of a company for whom he is responsible as its leader. He must be clearly identified with that company, not merely as one of its members, but as the one responsible for its direction and activities.

One who influences the attitudes and actions of others.

A leader has the ability to inspire others to the degree that he positively and consistently influences their attitudes and actions. He gets them moving in the right direction. He inspires them to keep going even when the road is rough and there are obstacles in the path.

Someone that others want to follow.

A leader has characteristics that make people want to follow him. A leader is not a leader if no one is following him. This is the ultimate indication of leadership qualities... people are following him! A person may know all the theoretical principles of leadership, they may be able to lecture on the subject or even write a book about it, but the true test of leadership is "follower-ship". Are people following him, and what kind of things are they accomplishing?

One with the ability to motivate others to achieve a goal.

An important part of effective leadership is the ability to motivate others, i.e. to get them moving in the right direction. But motivation is only effective if the ultimate objective is actually achieved. Some leaders get people moving. They get them actively involved in all kinds of programs and activities, but they never achieve the ultimate goal, they only go through the motions. True leadership gets things done. It achieves its ultimate goal.

SOME ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Prophetic, able to anticipate the future.

A most important aspect of good leadership is the ability to read and anticipate the future. The company executive must be able to discern the market trends of the future and anticipate what people will be wanting in the coming years. If he manufactures products that no one will need or want in five years' time, he has missed the mark.

In terms of Christian leadership, we sometimes call this person a "Visionary". Not someone who is always receiving spiritual visions, but one who has the ability to correctly anticipate the challenges and opportunities which the future will present. I have known some leaders who have purchased land in an area where there were no people and then seen a population explosion in that area which has surrounded their church building with thousands of homes. They "saw" the future trend and moved ahead of it.

Strategist, able to plan for the future.

A strategist is essentially practical. He does not only recognise the challenge of the future, he is also able to formulate plans to adequately meet the challenge. The strategist is not a dreamer. He is a realist. He recognises the opportunities before him and makes adequate, clear, workable, achievable plans to reap the harvest of the future.

A plan is as essential to Church Planting or Church Growth as it is to erecting a building. How foolish is the builder who would begin to build without first thoroughly formulating and documenting his plans. He sits down and considers every tiny aspect of the building he plans to erect. The architect is employed to design and draw it. The estimator does a thorough costing. The surveyor examines every aspect of the proposed site. The engineer evaluates the structural soundness of the plan. All of them reduce their findings and estimates to writing. In other words, the project is thoroughly planned and evaluated before any activity takes place. No sensible person would dream of attempting to build without a proper plan. Nor would they be allowed to do so. The local authorities would never approve the erecting of a building without the proper plans and strategy. Nor should the Christian leader become involved in activities without first making thorough investigations and appropriate plans.

Communicators.

One of the reasons why all strategies and plans should be clearly defined and committed to writing is so that they can be efficiently communicated. Every detail must be included so that the strategy in its entirety can be fully and clearly communicated to everyone involved.

The effective leader must be a clear and competent communicator. He must be able to share the vision and strategy convincingly so as to win the confidence, support and cooperation of his associates and workers. The development of communication skills is important in this regard. The successful leader must endeavour to develop and refine his abilities to communicate in writing, speech, and by other appropriate means.

Motivators.

To motivate is to stimulate the interest of people and to get them to act in a positive manner towards the fulfillment of a specific goal. It includes informing and inspiring them to get moving in a certain direction. It also involves keeping them motivated and moving consistently. The motivator is able to keep inspiring the workers and to keep up the momentum of forward movement.

Role models and examples.

A leader must be an example and role model of what he is encouraging his followers to be. He cannot persuade them to be committed to a task to which he is obviously not fully committed. More inspiration comes from example than from exhortation. If his leadership is obviously a case of, "Do what I say, not what I do", few people are likely to be motivated.

Someone people feel confident to follow.

A good leader wins the admiration of his followers. They want to emulate (imitate) him in some way. He provides for them a pattern upon which they will want to mould their own lives. In order to accomplish this the leader needs credibility and estimation in the eyes of his followers, and such credibility must be earned over a considerable period of time (often mainly through serving them).

Able to exercise authority.

Leaders must understand how to exercise authority. The usual manner in which this is learned is by being subject to authority your self. This is the reason for much of the basic training to which new recruits are subjected in the military. The main thing they have to learn is to be subject to authority and to obey orders without question. This is drilled into them for two main reasons. Firstly, so that they will unquestioningly obey their leaders in battle situations. Secondly, to help them understand the structure of authority so that they will be able to exercise it when they are given a role of authority.

This is beautifully illustrated in the story of the centurion whom Jesus commended. (Matt. 8:5-13). The officer understood the principles of authority because he was subject to authority and also held a position of authority. Jesus commented that He had never seen such faith in all Israel.

Organiser, to achieve the desired goal.

To organise is to formulate orderly arrangements for oneself and others in order to maximise the efficient fulfillment of a goal. Organising is essential to efficient management. An effective leader must efficiently manage his resources, including people, strategies, and material resources. To do this he needs to be a competent organiser.

Orchestra conductors, who inspire harmony.

An orchestra conductor is an excellent example of what leadership is all about. Each musician in the orchestra must first make sure that his or her instrument is properly tuned. Then the conductor ensures that each instrument is in tune with the common note he has given. He then gives a specific score to every musician and requires that each one plays their particular part faithfully and maintains perfect harmony with all other instruments. The conductor dictates the tempo and the manner in which the piece is performed. Everyone follows his lead and the result is a glorious and harmonious rendering.

A General, who marshals and commands his army.

This final analogy is possibly the most accurate of all, providing the “General” always remembers that he too is answerable to the Commander-in-Chief, Who is the Lord Himself. The General holds a high rank and has considerable authority, but he also is a “man under authority.” A General is always aware of the authority he can wield but he is also aware that ultimately his authority stems from his Commander in Chief.

The General also realises too that He is dependent on his fellow officers, the N.C.O.’s, and other ranks. Every member of the army is important. Even the lowly privates are indispensable. The effectiveness and success of the army depends on every member playing their part, in the right place, at the right time. The General is ultimately responsible to achieve this. He must ensure the morale of his troops. He must encourage their unity of purpose. He must work towards the fulfillment of the battle plan and get the whole army working as one man to achieve this.

Chapter Three - HAVING THE RIGHT MOTIVE

“Do you seek great things for yourself? Don’t seek them.” Jer. 45:5. In many ways Christian leadership is quite different from all secular forms of leadership and having the right motive is much more critical and essential.

TRUE CHRISTIAN LEADERS SEEK GREAT THINGS FOR:

A: THE GLORY OF GOD.

The overwhelming desire of Moses, one of the most remarkable and outstanding leaders in the Bible, was his desire to “see God’s glory.” (Ex. 33:18) “Glory”, can seem to be an abstract, somewhat cloudy or vague thing but in every-day terms it means: “Exaltation”, “Fame”, “Praise”, “Renown”, and “Honour”. As Christian leaders our chief desire should be to see God exalted in such a manner. We must desire to see God’s Name exalted and glorified in everything we do, and be determined that we will never cause His Name to be ridiculed or brought into disfavor. We should jealously guard the Name, reputation, honour, and glory of God.

B: THE WELL-BEING OF THOSE OVER WHOM THEY HAVE CHARGE.

Christian leaders are frequently portrayed as shepherds, with Jesus as The Good Shepherd. God’s people are also depicted as lambs, or sheep, for whom we as “under-shepherds”, must have genuine love and concern. The Good Shepherd is said to, “lay down his life for the sheep.” (John 10:15,17) He is our supreme example whom we should determine to emulate. We should have a servant heart

towards the sheep and their welfare, being willing to sacrifice on their behalf and ready to lay down our lives for them.

C: THE SAKE OF THE LOST FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED.

That same Shepherd is pictured leaving the ninety-nine sheep which are safe in the fold and going out into the night with all its potential dangers, to seek diligently until He eventually finds and brings home that sheep which was lost. Again He is our role model and example. In this analogy the Good Shepherd is seen in an evangelistic role, risking his very life in order to rescue the sheep which have gone astray into the paths of sin.

THE ADVANCEMENT AND GROWTH OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

Every Christian leader must be dedicated to the advancement, -not of himself, nor his denomination, or even his local church, - but of God's Kingdom. The primary prayer which Jesus instructed His disciples to pray was, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth, as it in heaven." We leaders are servants of that Kingdom, our main objective being the fulfillment of that prayer.

SOME WRONG MOTIVES:

THE ENJOYMENT OF POWER.

There is a potential pride and ego in many people that enjoy the opportunity to exercise power over others. For the carnal leader the Christian ministry affords opportunities to do just this and we must constantly guard against it. If we use the danger of "using the Name of the Lord in vain", something for which He will not hold us guiltless.

DESIRE TO INFLUENCE AND CONTROL OTHERS.

Many lives have been ruined by the carnal and unwarranted influence of a fleshly control. The Christian leader must avoid such attitudes at all cost. I believe that God will one day judge all who pervert His authority in this manner.

DESIRE FOR PRE-EMINENCE.

Even amongst the hand-picked disciples of Jesus this desire for pre-eminence was sadly prevalent. Jesus had to rebuke it on numerous occasions. Such attitudes run completely contrary to the spirit of the Kingdom, in which, "He who would be greatest, must be servant to all." (Mark 10:44).

TO ACHIEVE PERSONAL FULFILLMENT.

There is a legitimate sense in which the ministry affords opportunity for fulfillment and satisfaction, but this should never be our basic or primary goal. Our aim should be to fulfill and satisfy the Lord, - "that He might see the travail of His soul and be eminently rewarded." (Isaiah 53:11).

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INVOLVES SERVANTHOOD

In Mark 10:35-45 Jesus explained that the key to greatness in the Kingdom of God is servanthood. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, had approached Him seeking positions of prominence in the Kingdom and Jesus explained that the Kingdom of God was different from the Gentile world. In that world, leaders lorded it over their followers and exercised authority and dominion over them. "Yet it shall not be so among you: but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be servant of all."

Jesus is our finest role model, and He demands that we have the same attitude as He. Phil.2:5, "Let this attitude be in YOU."

HUMILITY.

Humility is firstly: humbleness of mind and heart. It presumes a modest restraint and self-control befitting a servant and is most beautifully exemplified in Jesus in His incarnational role. "He who knew that He was equal with God, "emptied Himself of His privileges" and took the role of a bond servant." (Phil. 2:7).

MEEKNESS.

Meekness means: to be humbly docile, pliant, and obedient, and is remarkably exemplified in Jesus as the, “Sheep which was dumb before its shearers.” (Is. 53:7) Meekness must never be confused with weakness. The two greatest Biblical examples of meekness were Moses and Jesus and neither of these could ever be thought to be weak. Meekness is actually great strength under control.

OBEDIENCE.

Obedience is: submission to the will of another. It depicts one who is humbly compliant and sweetly submissive to authority and to his Master. Obedience to God is therefore essential to salvation. Paul speaks of the, “Gentiles becoming obedience to the Gospel.” (Rom. 15:18). Obedience is also essential to discipleship and to spiritual development and growth.

Chapter Four - LAYING A GOOD FOUNDATION

The importance of good foundations.

Foundations are hidden and unspectacular, yet they are the important factor upon which the strength of the whole building ultimately depends.

THE ESSENTIAL FACTORS FOR LEADERSHIP FOUNDATIONS ARE:

Character, Gifting, and Personality.

Let's briefly look at those:

CHARACTER.

...person of character is someone of considerable inner strength, poise, reliability and consistency, who maintains high standards of morality and integrity. Such a person will never compromise his principles, but does not look with disdain on others who may not be able to live up to his personal standards. He is a fair and impartial person who treats everyone alike without fear or favour.

Character is the combination of strong inner resources that comprise the true person. It is a fortified blending of honesty, integrity, poise, moral strength, and consistency. True character is not flamboyant or showy. It is really the “hidden man of the heart.” Character is what a person truly is inside. It includes such solid characteristics as integrity, humility, modesty, reliability, patience, justice, mercy, and a commitment to live by the Golden Rule of, “Do unto others, as you would that they should do unto you.”

Depth of character has its own rewards. As the Psalmist said, “Consider the perfect man, and look at the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” (Ps. 37:37). God is always far more interested in what you BECOME, than in what you ACCOMPLISH. Here is an interesting and important equation for all leaders to consider CHARISMA minus CHARACTER = CHAOS.

Too many Christian leaders have fallen from their position because they had too much charisma, (personality and ego) and too little character. God is far more interested in our character, (the quality of our personal constitution) than in what we accomplish.

Character is the passive aspect of our being, Who are REALLY are! It is the collective qualities or characteristics that comprise our make up.

In the natural there are numerous influential factors:

HEREDITARY. The characteristics we inherit from our parents and forebears through genes, chromosomes and other character conveyors.

UPBRINGING. The influence of our environment, the ethics and principles we are taught in our early life.

EDUCATION. The sum of what we learn from our educational process.

EXPERIENCE. Those things we learn and imbibe from life experience.

There are the natural influences which helped form our character. When we become Christians, a whole new range of influences come into play:

THE “CHRIST IN YOU” - FACTOR. (Col. 1:27)

Christ came to change us from within.

THE FRUIT OF HIS SPIRIT. (Gal 5: 22-23).

IN THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN – Love, Joy, Peace.

IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS – Patience, Goodness, Gentleness.

TOWARDS GOD – Faithfulness, Meekness, Temperance.

THE LIVING WORD - FACTOR.

God is in His Word. His Character is in it. We imbibe Him and His characteristics through His Word. “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” (Col. 3:16). The Bible is infused with the character of God. Everything in it is consistent with God’s character. As we feed on the Word the character of God is formed within us. The book of Proverbs is an excellent example of this. It is filled with practical statements of wisdom which are consistent with God’s view on behavioural ethics. Every leader should read a chapter from Proverbs every day. Its practical wisdom and moral values would then be imprinted into the leader’s spirit and form the characteristics of God in him.

THE HOLY SPIRIT - FACTOR.

The disciples were transformed at Pentecost. (Acts 2). We too can be transformed by the power of God’s Spirit. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would, “guide us into all truth.” His presence within the believer is a quiet, but insistent prompting which always leads into truth, never into error. So as we allow ourselves to be led each day by the inner prompting of the Spirit, He will consistently guide us into those things which are, “noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.” (Phil. 4:8). As we faithfully walk in these virtues the character of God is formed within us.

THE “DEALINGS OF GOD” - FACTOR

God originally created mankind in His own image and likeness, but unfortunately that likeness was corrupted through the Fall, and from that time man has assumed the likeness of his natural forebears. Through Christ, God is seeking to restore His image and likeness in us. But his is not a simple or easily obtained purpose. It does not happen effortlessly. God has to allow us to go through various circumstances and situations in which He deals with us. “My son, do not despise the discipline of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves, He disciplines, and chastens every son He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are not chastened, then you are illegitimate and not sons.” (Heb. 12:5-8).

Let us briefly compare and contrast character and personality:

COMPARE CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY:

CHARACTER

PASSIVE ASPECT

WHO YOU ARE

PRIVATE

INTERNAL

PERSONALITY

ACTIVE ASPECT

WHAT YOU DO

PUBLIC

EXTERNAL

DEVELOPING THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

In Galatians 5:22-23 Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit, as, “Love Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Meekness and Temperance (or Self-control).” There are not virtues which we are to struggle to produce, they are the fruit which will be sweetly manifested in our lives if we will walk according to the Spirit of Christ within us. They are the obvious outcome

and evidence of one who is abiding in Christ, and He in them. The proof that we are allowing Him to live His life through us. Such graces are a part of the evidence that Christ is actually dwelling in you. Someone has asked, “If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be sufficient evidence to convict you?”

This list of virtues and attributes is a character description of Christ. Character is the passive aspect of our being. It is the kind of person we are. Often a pastor may be requested to write a character reference for someone – perhaps a member of his congregation. He will endeavour to faithfully describe what kind of person this is. He may say, “I have known this person for some five years, during which time I have found him to be to extremely loyal and trustworthy. He is also hard-working and conscientious. I have found him to be respectful of authority and a well-disciplined person. I am sure that he (or she) will prove to be an excellent employee and will render reliable service.” This is an attempt to describe what kind of person this is. Now when the Holy Spirit wishes to describe the kind of person that Jesus is, He says, “Jesus is Love, Joy and Peace. He is Longsuffering, Gentle and Good. He is Faithful, Meek and Temperate.”

The Holy Spirit is also longing to be able to say the same thing about you and me. He greatly desires to be able to honestly describe our characters in the same terms. He wants to make us into the image of Christ (1 Cor. 3:18) which includes our having the character of Christ. He wants us to ultimately manifest the life of Jesus to such a degree of maturity that these evidences of Christ’s life will be clearly and consistently displayed in our life. This can only be accomplished as we faithfully follow and obey the prompting of the Holy Spirit within our inner being.

Here are some desirable character traits for Christian Leaders:

These are all characteristics of the spiritual maturity that God is seeking to develop in us. They may be present in our natural character to some degree but God is seeking to strengthen them in us as expressions of the Fruit of the Spirit in us. All the spiritual influences that God has brought into our lives combine to produce in us a godly character, transforming us into the image and likeness of Christ, who is the express image of the Father. The truly effective Christian leader is not a ‘self made person’, but a "God made person". The traits and characteristics I shall share are not natural, human characteristics but a result of the Spirit of Christ indwelling us – plus the positive influences of God’s Word upon our life. We must recognise that our spiritual development is God’s primary concern. Thus we need to submit to Him in every circumstance that He brings us into. As we do **He uses every opportunity to mould us into the image of Jesus. Your leadership role is really more about what God can make of you, than what you can make of others.**

LONG-SUFFERING.

Patience, or longsuffering – as the Bible calls it, may seem to be a strange trait with which to head a list of desirable characteristics of an effective leaders but experience has taught me that it is an essential and indispensable one.

The ministry of Jesus surely confirms this. His relationship with the disciples in the early days of their association was characterised by His patience. Had He not persisted patiently with them one wonders if the early Church would ever have been birthed.

Christian leadership basically involves two things – God and people. Whenever we have to relate to people we need patience. It is frequently this requirement which God uses to develop in us fruit of longsuffering. God uses the circumstances and people in our lives to further the work of His Spirit in us, restoring the image of God to our life.

EMPATHY.

Empathy is the ability to identify in an understanding and compassionate manner with the thoughts and feelings of others. It is the capacity to put yourself in the other person’s place and be able to fully understand their perspective and point of view. Jesus was, “touched with the feelings of our infirmities.” He understands our needs and reaches out to us in empathy. Every Christian leader should pause periodically to examine his heart to see if it is still motivated by true concerns for others.

INTEGRITY AND HONESTY.

Integrity is: inner honesty, moral excellence and soundness of character. It implies a firm and consistent adherence to high moral principles and ethics. It is the credibility gained by consistent honesty and reliability displayed under various circumstances over a long period of time. To be a person of integrity means: to be someone utterly true to themselves and others – who can be trusted and relied upon. It is to be a person with a proven reputation for consistent honesty and reliability.

IMPARTIALITY.

A good leader must always aim to be consistent in his attitude towards people, endeavouring to treat everyone alike. He must be impartial at all times, treating everyone alike with fairness and equity. A pastor should never have favorites in his congregation. Obviously everyone has some persons who are closer to them others, even Jesus had His inner circle of Peter, James and John. Yet he was utterly fair with all the others – including Judas who betrayed Him.

STRENGTH AND RELIABILITY.

A leader must be strong, having firmness and being unwavering. Jesus was tender and meek, yet He was very firm and determined. One does not need to be hard to be firm. To be firm means: to be resolute and determined; it means to be constant and steadfast. The Bible says: “Let your yes be yes, and your no be no.” This is what we mean by firmness.

RESOLUTE AND DETERMINED.

A good leader must make up his mind and stay with it. Nothing is more disconcerting for potential followers than to have a leader who cannot make up his mind, or one who constantly changes his mind. Decision-making is an extremely important feature of good leadership, and the ability to be decisive and consistent is indispensable.

A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOUR.

Leadership is usually quite a serious business and it needs to be relieved periodically by a sense of humour, a leader needs to be able to see the funny side of things sometimes. This can be very refreshing, and can diffuse many a heavy situation. Like most other things however, it can also be overdone. An old adage says, “The bow which is always tense will soon lose its strength.” So the leader too needs times of recreation and refreshment. The ability to relax and to enjoy oneself is vital. The ability to enjoy a good laugh and to have a sense of fun, can be a safety valve essential to the maintenance of good health under pressure. Possibly the most important aspect of humour in leadership is to maintain the ability to laugh at yourself sometimes. Many leaders take themselves and their position too seriously and they need to come down to earth once in a while and enjoy a good laugh at themselves.

APPROACHABILITY.

Whilst every person, and especially those in leadership, need some degree of privacy in their life, a good leader must also be available and accessible to his followers. He must be approachable. People must feel that the leader is not insulated in some kind of splendid isolation.

OBEDIENCE.

“Therefore I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” Act 26:19. Our calling into the ministry is really a call from heaven, or a heavenly vision. Our ultimate responsibility is obedience to that call. However, we must also determine clearly what that call entails. We must discover the specific nature of our true calling. Exactly what has God called you to do? What is the particular gifting for which He has given you responsibility? Are you an Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor or Teacher? Or is your gifting some combination of any of these gifts? Be specific about this. Do not have false modesty and protest that you do not have any of these wonderful gifts. If you truly do not have any of these gifts then probably God has not called you to be a minister – for whom He calls, He also equips. Find and follow the specific calling that God has given you. Determine to discharge your calling in obedience to God’s Will.

Are you called to the particular place and congregation to whom you are presently ministering? Are you the right person, in the right place, at the right time? If you are convinced of this, then God has a specific plan for you to follow and fulfill there. Your primary task is to identify it and fulfill it.

OBJECTIVE.

To be objective is firstly to look at things in an impartial, unbiased, and unprejudiced manner. To be detached from emotional sentimental, and personal influences. To look at things practically and pragmatically. To make decisions which are based on facts rather than feelings. An effective and widely used style of management today is popularly known as “M.B.O.” or – Management By Objectives. It signifies a management style that knows its ultimate objective and tailors everything to the reaching and fulfilling of its objectives. It emphasises the importance of recognising and defining the ultimate objective, and determining all policy in the light of ultimate fulfillment of the object. It demands a LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE that is known and owned by every member of the team. It also supplies the short term goals which will lead to the long term objective.

It is a welcome change from the “crisis management” style that many churches appear to have unwittingly adopted, in which the church has no long-term objective but simply lurches from one crisis to the next.

There is an occupational hazard in Christian work of being – “too heavenly minded to be of any earthly use.” Administrative efficiency is often viewed as being less than spiritual and is spurned by those who consider themselves to be the spiritual elite. This is far from the truth. God has given us a heavenly vision, but part of our leadership gifts is to translate that vision into earthly reality – “Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

For many people, spiritual concept is vague and abstract to the point of becoming spooky. Our balanced desire must be to be “naturally spiritual, and spiritually natural.” Our message is that God has come down to earth in the form of His Son and we must make that earthly manifestation relevant and real.

TACTFUL.

Tact is the skill of relating sensitively to others, especially in the context of delicate situations. It is the art of knowing the right thing to say, and the right time and manner in which to say it. It is the skill of dealing with people without causing unnecessary offence or hurt. The ability to defuse potentially explosive situations by taking the right approach and dealing with the issue in a tactful and caring manner. It is the art of managing inter-personal relationships and it requires the right mixture of gentleness and firmness.

OBSERVANT.

Another good Bible word for pastor is “Overseer”, meaning: “to watch over”. The Christian leader much therefore be observant. “Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and give attention to your herds.” Prov. 27:23. The first area for diligent attention is your own life, behavior, and conduct. The second is your congregation. (“Flocks and herds”). As a shepherd you must know how many sheep you have. You should know those sheep personally. You should know their condition. You must be genuinely and deeply concerned for their spiritual well-being. You need to care for them. Guide them, protect them, and feed them. You can only do these things efficiently if you first know their current situation and you can only monitor this by proper oversight, organisation and administration.

DILIGENT.

A good and effective leader must be a diligent operator. He must be far more than a scholar, a theologian, or a theorist. He must be active, busy, working and productive. Diligent means: attentive, active, industrious and persistent, in other words a person who is working industriously, consistently and effectively. “Do you see a (diligent) man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.” Prov. 22:29. “Occupy, (do business) till I come.” (Luke19:13). The word occupy means: “to do business”; the Greek word is “*pragmatazomai*” from which we derive our word “pragmatic” – dealing with matters from a

practical point of view. “The diligent man will rule, but the lazy will be put to forced labour.” Prov. 12:24. “Diligence is man’s precious possession.” Prov. 12:27.

ENTHUSIASTIC.

The root of the word “Enthusiasm”, is: “En–Theos”, or “in God.” So Christian leaders ought never to be embarrassed or ashamed of genuine enthusiasm. It is a commodity which is sadly lacking in many Christian enterprises, yet little can be accomplished without it. Unfortunately many Christians, and particularly ministers, are suspicious of emotional expression including that which is a part of genuine enthusiasm. They adopt a stoic attitude to life, rather than an enthusiastic one. Jesus Himself was both enthusiastic and emotive, and we should not be afraid of either of these, providing they are balanced and kept in right proportion.

OPTIMISTIC.

Leadership must always be optimistic. Optimism is the positive view of life and circumstances – the view that always sees the possibilities rather than the problems. Joshua and Caleb were classic optimists, they saw the positive aspects of the Promised Land, while the pessimists were overwhelmed by their awareness of the giants.

Faith is always optimistic and faith is imperative to church growth. If you have faith, you are optimistic and you believe that the positive will triumph over the negative. The problems will prove to be opportunities. You believe that, “Greater are those which are for you than all that are against you.” There are two other words that derive from the same root as optimism and both are important to leaders. The first is “Optimise” – the ability to make the best or most effective use of things. The second is “Optimum” – providing the most favourable conditions for growth. Only an optimist can generate these capacities!

INSPIRATIONAL.

An effective leader must have the capacity to inspire others by his words and example. To inspire means: to encourage, investigate and motivate to action. It means to put spirit to people. To awaken and enliven them. To get them moving and acting in order to accomplish a common objective. To do this the leader himself must be truly inspired and this quality of inspiration can only come from God.

Besides Character traits, important are Giftings and

Personality GIFTINGS

Giftings: are those abilities and skills we possess, some of which are natural endowments, and others are acquired skills.

NATURAL ABILITIES.

Giftings of temperament, emotions, disposition, appearance, voice qualities, and personality. These are all natural aspects of our own unique being and personage. Some people seem to be more fortunate than others in respect to their inherited personality. Many have natural features that make an attractive and appealing person who is greatly admired and much sought after. Others appear to be less fortunate with characteristics that are less appealing. No one needs to despair because personality characteristics can be developed and enhanced. Some persons who initially appear to have little personality have successfully developed what they had and made themselves into extremely interesting and winsome people. As the fruit of Christ’s Spirit is allowed to develop within us, so our personalities are enriched and enhanced. There is nothing that will enhance a person as wonderfully as the manifestation of Jesus in them and this is what God is seeking to accomplish.

Other giftings may be acquired, we may call them:

NURTURAL OR ACQUIRED SKILLS.

These include knowledge, learned skills, preaching skills, worship leading abilities, administrative abilities and organisational skills.

These are all features that may be learned, practised and developed to enrich and further the leadership potential in any prospective leader. You should determine to enrich your leadership abilities through diligent study and practice. Read suitable books and attend leadership seminars. Make every possible effort to increase your knowledge and understanding of the various skills that enhance leadership ability. Observe your senior leaders, especially those who have been signally successful in their spheres. Don't try to copy them, but do seek to emulate (equal or excel) them. Let their faith and their accomplishments for God be a source of inspiration to you. Try to adopt them as your "Mentors" – (Experienced and trusted advisers). Some people are naturally more gifted than others but many giftings and skills may be acquired through diligent study and preparation.

Many of the skills required in Christian leadership may be learned from study courses offered in Bible Colleges or Seminaries. Unfortunately the main emphasis in many such places is often heavily theological, academic and theoretical. The very practical issues of leadership are often neglected tasks that await them. It is also true that many potential leaders, evangelists, and pastors are not able to avail themselves of the opportunity to train in a Bible Colleges. Here we have endeavoured to offer some teaching on those basic issues and skills that are necessarily in effective Christian leadership.

PERSONALITY

Personality is the combination of all our natural features of temperament, character, appearance, voice, etc. that constitute the unique individual. It is the medium through which a person expresses himself. It is the visible and communicable expressions of a person's distinctive characteristics and individuality. It is the expression of the sum total of his individual characteristics and it is largely this which distinguishes one person from others.

Personality is not as simple to define as is character. It frequently has some aspects which are almost indescribable. It is communicated in numerous ways and is an extremely important adjunct to communication skill, particularly in vocal communication. An interesting personality can mean the difference between a boring sermon and an enthralling one. An engaging personality can hold the attention of his audience whilst feeding them with spiritual truth. A sincere preacher who is lacking in personality may lose his audience. In contrast, a sanctified personality with a sense of humour and an ability to communicate in an interesting manner, can captivate a congregation and hold them enthralled whilst teaching spiritual truth.

Jesus was undoubtedly a colourful and engaging person. He evidently projected His unique and attractive personality as He communicated to His listeners in an interesting and enthralling manner. They sat for hours listening to Him, forgetting about meals and all other earthly things. They walked miles to hear Him. He used fascinating parables and illustrations and His sermons were filled with human interesting stories.

Your personality is your greatest human asset. Study and understand it. Develop and use it. But always remember that "Christ in you" is an incomparably greater asset.

An attractive and winsome personality can be one of your most important assets as a leader and a preacher. However, it must be surrendered to God and you must allow Him to resurrect it in a form that is pleasing to Him. An egotistical personality, (self-centered, proud and stubborn) can be as great a problem as a sanctified one is a blessing.

Chapter Five - COUNTING THE COST OF LEADERSHIP

"Are you able to be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised?" (Matt. 20:22). "For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it?" (Luke 14:28). With anything worthwhile there is a cost to pay, and the privilege of Christian leadership is no exception. So we should obey the injunction of Jesus and "sit down first and count the cost", to see if we are able and willing to pay the price required of a leader. Here are some of the costs involved.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR “THE WORK OF GOD”

Leadership of God’s people is a high and holy calling of great responsibility. Such responsibility should never be taken lightly. We are responsible for the honour of God’s Name, for people frequently judge God by the behaviour of His people and particularly those in leadership roles.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

God has high expectations of His servants. The people under our leadership, and the public generally have also. We have high expectations of ourselves as Christian leaders.

THE “BURDEN” OF LEADERSHIP

A burden is a heavy load of responsibility. Being responsible to deliver the Word of the Lord is often a heavy burden. Being responsible for the care of God’s people can be burdensome. Moses carried a heavy burden of leadership responsibility, which Jethro advised him to let the elders share with him. (Ex. 18:2). Jesus encouraged us to learn from Him some secrets which can make our burdens lighter. (Matt. 11:28-30).

THE LONELINESS OF LEADERSHIP

There is always a certain loneliness about the top position in any organisation. There are often concerns that are not always appropriate to share with others. Other people frequently share things in confidence and those confidences become concerns which cannot be shared with others.

THE PRESSURES AND STRESS OF LEADERSHIP

Serious responsibilities, a heavy workload, and pressing urgencies, can often apply pressure, stress and tension to a leader. It is essential that the leader learns how to relax and take a break from the pressures of leadership. Jesus Himself did this many times. If He needed to do so how more do we?

LEARNING TO HANDLE CRITICISM

In an ideal setting, criticism should not exist. But the reality of life is that it does and every leader needs to learn how to cope with it otherwise it may discourage and destroy him. Most criticism comes from persons who are not qualified to make such judgements anyway. I have always found it helpful to ask myself. “How qualified is this person to make such criticism?” If I realise that the person has little knowledge or experience in the things about which they are making comment, I feel that I may treat their judgement lightly. However, if someone experienced and knowledgeable, who has proved that they know what they are talking about makes a criticism, then I will listen and evaluate what they are saying.

OVERCOMING TEMPATIONS

The great characters of the Bible prove that God’s servants are often the targets of temptation. One should never presume immunity. The Scriptures says, “Let him that thinks he stand, take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. 10:12).

Christian leaders are special targets of the enemy. If Satan can smite the shepherd then the sheep will be scattered. If he can bring about the downfall of a leader, the morale of all the people is adversely affected. Every leader needs to be watchful and vigilant because, “our adversary the Devil is prowling around seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Pet. 5: 8).

MAINTAINING YOUR INTEGRITY

Integrity is moral soundness, honesty, and excellence of character. It relates to your good, consistent credibility and reputation. The root of the word integrity, (integer) relates to completeness and soundness. In respect of character, it involves honesty, virtue, moral soundness uprightness and principle. It is vitally important to the Christian leader in several ways. Firstly, it is important that the leader maintain his integrity before God i.e. that he is transparently honest with God. Secondly, he must be a person of integrity for the sake of the people and the work of God. People need to know that they can trust their leader. But even more important than this is the fact

that the leader must maintain integrity for his own sake because if the leader lacks genuine integrity he will not be able to live with himself.

PRESSURES ON THE LEADER'S FAMILY

The pressures of leadership do not only fall upon the leader per se, they also affect his spouse and family. So they too need to have some respite from the constant pressures which leadership brings. Pastor's children often have to cope with unwanted pressures as people tend to expect more of them because of who their parents are. They need help and encouragement in order to cope with this. They also need to enjoy some compensations and benefits from their role.

It is important that the leader recognises the importance of this issue and takes some positive steps to address the reality of its challenge. He needs to positively endeavour to balance the role of his family with the blessings of their role, as well as the responsibilities. They need to be aware of, and enjoy some privileges of their position, in addition to carrying all the responsibilities of it.

Chapter Six - SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF LEADERSHIP

An effective leader needs:

A CLEAR SENSE OF DIRECTION.

“Without a vision (clear sense of direction) the people lack fulfillment.” Prov. 29:18. To be an effective leader, you must have a clear concept of where you are going in life. If you do not know where you are going, how can you lead others?

This involves a “Vision” which must be:

GOD-GIVEN.

Effective Christian leadership does not involve the fulfillment of one's own vision, but the vision that is given by God. The idea is not to create a vision, but to receive and fulfill the vision that is from God's heart.

SPIRITUAL.

The vision is given by the Spirit. Therefore it is a spiritual vision. I am not necessarily referring to a supernatural type of vision that was frequently experienced in the Bible. By spiritual vision I mean: a mental or spiritual “picture” which is birthed within your spirit by the Holy Spirit. A spiritual picture or awareness of what is to come. Our task is to interpret that vision and make it happen. To see “God's Will done on earth as it is in heaven.”

SPECIFIC.

Although the vision is initially spiritual in nature, it is not vague or inconclusive. As we wait upon God in prayer and meditation He will reveal the specific details of all that He wants us to accomplish for Him. A fine example of this is that of Moses and the Tabernacle. As God began to speak to Moses about the Tabernacle He wanted him to build, a vision of that place gripped the heart of Moses. He continued to dwell on the mountain with God for forty days and forty nights during which time God revealed every detail of the Tabernacle and all its furnishing and their functions. (Exodus. 24:18 – 40:36).

Once we receive a concept from God we should hold it before Him in prayer. The longer we wait on Him, prayerfully meditating on the vision, the clearer and more specific it will become. As we wait attentively in God's presence He will fill in all the specific details for us, as He did for Moses on the mountain. It is essential for us as leaders that we learn to hear and discern the voice of God in a clear manner. It is not sufficient to have some vague and inconclusive idea of what God wants us to accomplish. We need His direction to register clearly within our spirit so that we know clearly and in detail what He has planned for us to do.

Initially Moses had only a broad idea of what God wanted him to do. He sensed that God was preparing him to be a deliverer of the Children of Israel, to bring them deliverance from the hardships and injustices they were suffering under their Egyptian captors. In consequences Moses

began to attempt this in his own strength but all that he accomplished was the murder of one Egyptian and then he had to flee the land as a fugitive. However, it was in the “backside of the desert”, the refuge to which he had fled, that Moses discovered God in a far deeper dimension and also discovered more clearly what it was that God wanted him to do. Moses began to develop a much more consistent relationship with God. One in which he and the Lord established lines of communication through which God was able to share His heart and convey all the finer details of what He had planned for Moses.

God has often to allow us to get into difficulties and to experience some desert like trials in order to encourage us to truly reach out to Him. It is often in the place of extremity - when we have reached the end of our tether (rope for fastening), that God steps into our circumstances because we begin to seek Him and call on Him from an earnest heart. God can really get our attention when we find ourselves in a trying circumstance for which we have no human solutions. It is interesting to discover how many of God’s servants received their life call and were launched into their ministry whilst experiencing a period of testing and human extremity. If God has allowed your life to reach such a place, please don’t despair. God is with you in your desert experience. He has the ability to bring you through this difficult time. Not only will you survive it, you will come through enriched and more suitably prepared to fulfill the purpose for which God has brought you into His Kingdom. God has done this many times before and He can do it again!

MEASURABLE.

The details which God gave to Moses included specific measurements and weights. The whole project could be accurately measured, calculated and costs counted. In a similar manner the vision which God will give of growth and expansion is one which can be measured and we can monitor the fulfillment of it. It is sometimes quite remarkable how detailed God’s plans are, and a tremendous thrill to see Him fulfilling them to the smallest detail.

IT MUST HAVE A FAITH FACTOR. Rom. 12:3.

Every vision which God gives will have a faith factor built into it, “for without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Heb. 11:6). So the fulfillment of that vision will require the exercise of your faith, and as we work towards its accomplishment God will stretch and increase your faith.

The faith factor will demand that faith is exercised for the fulfillment of every part of the project. It will also mean that there will always be the possibility of failure too if the work is not done in faith. It is not only difficult to accomplish God’s work in our own strength – IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

Thus you need to consider your vision:

PRAYERFULLY.

Everything we ever do for God begins with prayer and relies upon prayer for its development and fulfillment. If you want God to speak to your heart and reveal to you His will then determine to seek Him in prayer. Remember that prayer is not simply you speaking to God, the most important aspect of prayer is when God speaks to you. Every Bible character who ever accomplished anything for God received his commission in the place of prayer and spiritual communion. Every leader who accomplishes anything for God today will of necessity be a person prayer.

PATIENTLY.

The burden of the Lord is not conveyed to a person during their spare moments. It is revealed in its fullness, as they patiently wait before Him. Moses spent forty days and nights and God on Mount Sinai. Throughout that whole time God patiently and tediously conveyed to Moses every detail of the project He had commissioned him to accomplish.

POSITIVELY.

It is essential, as we wait before God for the revelation of His Will, that we do so in a positive attitude of heart and mind. God can only unveil His Will to people of faith. He reveals things that are far beyond the mind of the natural man and this requires a positive faith attitude to receive it.

We can only enter the Promised Land of the fulfillment of God's purposes as we exercise a positive attitude towards those things which He reveals. Don't waste God's time or yours by attempting to find His Will whilst harbouring a negative or doubting attitude.

PROPHETICALLY.

In addition to having a positive attitude you also need to cultivate a prophetic perspective. That is looking into God's future with the eyes of faith and seeing by faith the spiritual fulfillment of things before it actually happens in the natural. You can receive a prophetic picture in your spirit of all that God wants to accomplish through you and of the plan He has ordained for you.

Other aspects of a God-given vision:

ENVISION IT. "See it", with the eyes of your spirit.

EVALUATE IT. Appraise, assess, and thoroughly grasp it.

WRITE IT DOWN. Commit every detail to writing.

EXPRESS IT. Verbalise it. Confess it. "Let the words of my mouth, and the thoughtful meditations of my heart, be acceptable in your sight O Lord my strength." (Ps. 19:14).

A DETERMINED DESIRE FOR FULFILLMENT.

Between the birth of a vision and its ultimate fulfillment lie many testings and challenges.

You will need:

DECISIVENESS.

Make a strong decisive commitment and stick to it. "A double minded person is unstable in all his ways, he will receive nothing from the Lord." (James 1:7-8).

DEDICATION.

Dedicate yourself whole heartedly to the fulfillment of the vision. This means to be devoted and to have single-minded loyalty to the aim or vocation. To dedicate something has a very strong significance in the Bible. Once something is dedicated to God, it becomes His peculiar property. It is said to be made, "Holy unto the Lord" and can never be retrieved. This is the nature of dedication that God demands, to Himself and to the work of His Kingdom.

DETERMINATION.

Determination means: to act with complete resolution of purpose. It is the factor which makes both decision and dedication to function effectively because it implies:

Making a definite decision.

Dedicating yourself to the fulfillment of the decision.

Carrying through that resolve with resolute purpose, no matter what may arise.

A SELF-ACTIVATED PERSON.

A self starter – choosing to take the initiative. A highly motivated person. Leaders are usually on "the top of the pile", with no immediate "boss" over them to keep them motivated. So they need to be strongly self-motivated persons who can arouse their own enthusiasm and energy levels. They must also be able to sustain and prolong those levels consistently.

SELF DISCIPLINED.

Matt. 16:24, "If anyone desires to come after Me, (be My disciple) let him deny (discipline) himself." Self-discipline is essential to any leader. The maintenance of his personal integrity is essential to the continuing morale of his followers. Since his position of leadership affords him a measure of liberty to determine his own program and commitment level, he must be true to his own self in order to remain true to God, his calling and his associates. Since he is the leader of the team and responsible for the discipline of his subordinates, he must ensure the discipline of his own life.

He must discipline:

His spiritual life, devotions, etc.

This is the most important and critical of all the areas to be disciplined, for if one fails here, then every other area will suffer. It is in the disciplined maintenance of his spiritual life and relationship that everything else finds its proper level. If the leader fails to make time and opportunity for regular spiritual renewal and to replenish his spiritual resources then he will probably lack the required strength to properly discipline the other important areas of his personal life.

His time.

A leader is frequently in charge of his own timetable. He can often choose his work schedule and what he does with his time. So it is essential that he guards this privilege with integrity to make sure that he does not waste or misuse precious time. He should make himself accountable to someone in this respect just as all his associates are responsible to him.

His sexual drives and energies.

Every person, including Christian leaders, possesses certain latent sexual drives and resources that must be discharged in one way or another. The first, and most obvious manner to accomplish this is the context and relationship of one's marriage. Spiritual leaders need to have healthy marriage relationships and adequate sexual fulfillment and enjoyment within that relationship. However, these energies will not always be totally absorbed in even the most replete and fulfilling marriage relationship. They must also be diverted into other creative and energy demanding activities and used to their fullest capacity for the good of others. These drives are resources of energy and strength that are intended to fuel the creative abilities of a person. They must be fully utilised in life and ministry, otherwise they may seek release in ill-advised and inappropriate ways.

His personal relationship.

A leader must always exercise wisdom and discretion in his choice of companions and the relationships he chooses to establish. He must not appear to have an inner circle, other than the one comprised of his associated and fellow workers. Nor must he appear to be other than impartial in affording the favours of his friendship. Leaders must also exercise very strong discretion in respect of any kind of relationship with members of the opposite sex. It is so easy for these to get out of hand and produce a disastrous result.

CONSISTENT.

A consistent person is someone who is: constant, persistent, faithful to the same principles. Reliable, consistent, always the same, unswerving. Consistency and reliability are aspects of character, but as Christian leaders we need much more than merely human characteristics. We need God, to Whose character these traits are integral, to build them into our spirits too.

GOOD CONSCIENCE.

Conscience is the faculty within us which influences the moral quality of our thoughts, words and actions. No Christian can function effectively to their fullest potential while they have a disturbed conscience. Trying to work for God whilst harbouring an offended conscience, is like driving a car with the hand brake on. John says, "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, then we have confidence towards God, and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things which are pleasing in His sight." (1 John 3:20- 21). "I have lived in all good conscience." (Acts 23:1). "To have a conscience, void of offence." (Acts 24:16). "A pure heart, and a good conscience." (1 Tim. 1:5).

A troubled conscience, robs us confidence towards God. It paralyses our faith faculties. (1 John 3:21). It restricts our capacity to receive. (We anticipate evil, rather than good).

HUMBLE AND TEACHABLE SPIRIT.

Everyone has much to learn, but it takes true humility to recognise and acknowledge this. Jesus Himself is the supreme examples of the beauty of a teachable spirit. He declared Himself to be meek and lowly in heart. (Matt 11:29). And the Bible tells us that He learned from the things which He suffered. (experienced) (Heb. 5:8).

WISDOM FROM ABOVE.

What is the secret of success? – having the wisdom to make right decisions! James tells us that, “if any of you lack wisdom, you are to ask of God in faith, and He will give it you.” (James 1:5-8; 3:17). Human wisdom is good and is certainly a tremendous asset to a leader but it is inadequate for all the challenges of spiritual leadership. We really need a combination of human and divine wisdom, always realising that the two may appear to be at variance sometimes, in which case the divine wisdom must always take precedence. King Solomon is an excellent example of a wise leader who used his natural wisdom to obtain divine wisdom which enhanced his leadership abilities enormously. (2 Chron. 1:7 –12).

A BALANCED LIFE-STYLE.

“Jesus grew in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and with man.” (Luke 2:52). His growth developed in four directions: mentally, physically, spiritually and socially – which is healthy growth. Try to keep your life and activities well balanced. Engage in edifying activities that will develop and strengthen every part of your life. In addition to growing and developing physically, Jesus developed in wisdom. This is mental or intellectual development. We can pursue this through the reading and studying of excellent books and through attending seminars and lectures where we can expand our knowledge and understanding of many things. Our minds need to be stimulated and challenged. We can benefit enormously from positively extending the horizons of our mind.

Jesus also developed socially. “He grew in favour with man.” This involves learning how to relate to people. Unfortunately, many preachers feel the development of this art is unnecessary. They despise social graces and the observance of those things that enhance social relationships and interaction. But Jesus evidently developed in these areas and was extremely popular with the masses of people for the major part of his earthly life.

Of course the development of our spiritual life is by far the most important, but not so important that the other developments are superfluous or unnecessary.

THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

I have always believed that “Truth lies in the middle of the road” and is balanced. And that if we go to either extreme, right or left, we are likely to get into error. Anyone who goes to the extreme is likely to develop an inconsistency. If a person becomes too narrow minded and too “spiritual”, or too “holy”, they frequently become inconsistent.

A great teacher wrote, “Let a person say: “Since jealousy, lust and desire for honour are evil ways...I will separate myself completely from them and go to the other extreme, to the point where he refuses to enjoy the pleasure of food by abstaining from eating pleasant food, where he refuses to marry a wife, or to live in a pleasant house or wear nice clothing but instead chooses to dress in rags...this too is an evil way.”

The best and straightest road that a person should train himself to go on is the middle road (where he develops the moderate quality in each and every personality trait). And he who goes along this middle road is called a wise man.

BE A “PEOPLE PERSON”.

I never tire of telling young preachers that the ministry is basically about two things: it is about God, and it is about people. Developing your relationship with God is essential, but studying human nature and learning to like people and get along well with them is also vitally necessary. Jesus was a great student of human nature. The Bible says, “But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.” (John 2:24-25).

DEVELOP A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOUR.

A good sense of humour is always a blessing, but particularly so for leaders. Many serious and sad things may happen in the course of your ministry to people and there are many sources of stress. You need the relief and relaxation of being able to see the funny side of life too.

A good sense of humour can often help relationship to function more enjoyably. It can also be a special blessing to a preacher. Preaching can often be a weighty matter and sometimes needs the relief which only a fine sense of humour can provide. However, the preacher needs to exercise caution here too. The humour needs to be appropriate and should always be in good taste. We should particularly avoid the kind of humour that is at the expense of someone else. What is amusing to one, can be extremely hurtful to another. It is particularly helpful to be able to laugh at yourself once in a while. If you don't allow yourself to laugh sometimes, you will probably cry.

BE PHILOSOPHICAL.

The basic meaning of this word is, "Love of wisdom." However, it also means: "To be detached, so as to remain calm under pressure." It is this second meaning with which I am particularly concerned now. The ministry frequently requires us to be involved in many people's problems and hurts. If we allow ourselves to become too emotionally involved, with too many people and too many problems, the pressure may become more than our system can handle. Therefore we frequently need to maintain some measure of emotional detachment. A good doctor knows the benefit of this. He is aware of the danger of being too emotionally attached or concerned about his patient. To function effectively as their surgeon or doctor, he must maintain a certain amount of detachment and distance. This is true in the ministry to some degree. One can often see more from the "Touch line" of life, than if you are too close to a person and their problems.

There is also a real danger of having the problems of too many people on your mind. The pressures and tensions of carrying too many loads can sometimes be too much for one person. This is particularly true if you have a genuine heart of concern for people. There is a tendency to feel too deeply for them. Of course we know that all these burdens should be cast on the Lord. But not everyone is able to do this as effectively as required and as a result they themselves collapse under the weight of emotional load. I feel that something of this nature happened to Paul's friend Epaphroditus who was, "sick almost to the point of death...because for the work of Christ, he came close to death, risking his life to supply what was lacking in your service towards me." (Phil. 2:27a, 30).

It is a very real and fearful occupational hazard that must be avoided at all costs. Overwork and too much pressure and tension can cause this condition. Every leader needs to be aware of this danger and take every precaution to avoid becoming a victim of it. I have devoted a later chapter to the recognition and treatment of this problem.

EFFECTIVE LEADERS MUST BE GOOD COMMUNICATORS.

One of the most important aspects of effective leadership is good communication and every leader should concentrate on developing every possible dimension of human communication skills. The foremost of these is vocal communication. The ability to communicate information through the spoken word, clearly, concisely and in an engaging and interesting manner. The leader must develop the skill of winning and holding people's attention through the presentation of words. A further skill that might be developed is that of writing. A weekly newsletter is an excellent means of keeping people informed of the many aspects and developments of a vibrant program.

CLEAR COMMUNICATION AMONGST THE LEADERSHIP.

Whilst the vision, its strategies and plans, are still in the embryo stage the leadership team must prayerfully and carefully consider every possible aspect of a proposed program of activity. They must pray about it, talk about it, discuss and thoroughly evaluate it. If there are any misgivings or misconceptions about it, this is the time to discover them. The whole proposal must be thoroughly aired and minutely discussed so that every possible contingency may be considered.

It is during this period that the leadership becomes convinced about the vision one way or another. They either become inspired with excited anticipation or they begin to have serious misgivings about the validity and feasibility of it.

The leadership team must share the vision in great detail. They must:

Pray about it together.
Invite, and receive feed-back, and evaluate it together.
Plan together.
Assign clear profiles. (Written job descriptions).
Delegate sufficient authority.
Require regular reports back.
Meet with combined leadership regularly.
Meet with individual leaders consistently.

A CLEAR VISION MUST BE COMMUNICATED TO THE PEOPLE.

In order to effectively fulfill a specific task the people involved must have a thorough understanding of all that is envisaged and required. It is not sufficient for the leaders to know the way ahead. Everyone else who will be part of its fulfillment must also have a clear and thorough understanding of it. It is part of the leader's task to communicate the task clearly and comprehensively. The Lord told Habakkuk, "Write the vision, and make it plain, that (even) he who runs may read it." (Hab. 2:2).

In order for a church to fully comprehend a program or vision, that vision must be communicated clearly, consistently and comprehensively. They must hear it again and again from every perspective. They must hear it, and see it. It must be conveyed to them in a wide variety of ways. They must be informed, inspired and motivated at every opportunity until the vision becomes part of their very lives. In order to do this the leadership must prayerfully and thoroughly acquaint themselves with every aspect of the vision until the telling of it becomes second nature to them. They must be able to communicate clearly:

What has God shared with you? - Inspiration
Where is the Church heading? – Direction
How are we going to get there? – Goals towards achievement
What Instruction and Training is available?

MASTER THE "INTER-PERSONAL" COMMUNICATION.

The leader must communicate with each team member individually and personally as well as in the context of the whole team. This is to ensure that each team member is genuinely committed to the task. If the vision is only discussed in the corporate context of the team, there may be individual members who have misgivings or reservations that they are not bold enough to share in the team meeting. So each member must be individually approached and spoken to so that they have ample opportunity to share what they truly feel about the vision generally, and about their role in particular. The leader must approach each individual team member:

To improve their leadership skills.
To assess their progress or otherwise.
To utilise your mentoring skills.
Ensure that your approach is non-threatening.
Never confront when you are emotionally disturbed.

GOOD LEADERS MUST BE GOOD LISTENERS.

It is true that leaders must be competent communicators, but they must also be good listeners. The ear of the leader must always be open to God, and also to this associates and team members. One of the places where this must happen is:

e.g. STAFF MEETINGS.

Does everyone have the opportunity to speak openly?
Does your leadership foster a genuine team spirit?
Do team relationships improve with interactions?
Can you interpret and communicate group thinking patterns?
Are the decisions made really corporate ones?

GOOD LEADERS NEED TO BE EFFECTIVE SPEAKERS.

Effective leaders need to be competent communicators in every field of communications, but they should be particularly adept in vocal and verbal skills. It is obvious in the Bible that most of the leaders were effective in verbal communication skills.

Effective speech is one of the most powerful motivators available. Powerful orators have moved nations at critical times of their history.

In the sphere of Christian leadership the power of speech is clearly important for both preaching and teaching. In addition to this it is important in the area of inspiring and motivating people to fulfill the vision of their churches.

16: GOOD LEADERS DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION NETWORK AT ALL LEVELS.

The effective leader must never work in isolation. The secret of his success is the harmonious functioning of his team and followers. To achieve that it is essential that he keeps his lines of communication open and effective.

At Staff level. Regular meaningful meetings where reports can be made, discussed and analysed. Each delegated leader can report on the activities of his particular department. Plans and future activities can be prayerfully formulated at this leadership level.

At Congregational level. It is important that the church members be kept informed of all phases of the program in order to maintain their prayerful support. News of various activities can be shared through announcements and if possible through some kind of regular bulletin or newsletter.

At Small (Cell) Group level. In the church of the future cell groups, or house churches, will become more important than ever. The cell group church is the church of the future. So it is vitally important that the leaders and members of these groups are regularly informed about the plans and activities of the church. They must be an integral part of the vision.

GOOD LEADERS MUST GENERATE POSITIVE DYNAMIC.

EFFECTIVE LEADERS EXPRESS LEADERSHIP DYNAMIC.

Effective leaders possess and generate a certain charisma or influence which both attracts and influences people. It is sometimes an almost indefinable feature but something that is sensed and sub-consciously recognised by others. An invisible quality that attracts others like a magnet.

It is abundantly obvious that most Bible characters had such a presence. Certainly Jesus projected it. Wherever He went, the crowds flocked after Him. They were fascinated by His talks, hanging on to every word He spoke. His leadership presence was manifest in everything He said and everything He did. John the Baptist had a very similar dynamic. In fact, many people likened him to Jesus. (Matt. 16:14). Paul too manifested this remarkable leadership dynamic.

The manner in which this quality is conveyed differs from person to person. However, in whatever form it occurs, it is essential that a leader has this quality. It is the quality which places him "head and shoulders above the people", and marks him as a true leader. A leader must demonstrate leadership qualities far above the average.

A LEADER MUST BE SEEN. He must be conspicuous and clearly recognisable as a leader. People should be able to discern this immediately. There is a distinct mark of leadership upon him. There is a mantle of leadership authority upon his life.

A LEADER MUST BE HEARD. There is always a compelling force in the voice of a true leader. It is not necessarily in the natural tone or quality of the voice. But there is something about the way he says things which attracts attention, holds his listeners, moves them to action and inspires them to work.

A LEADER MUST BE A ROLE MODEL. A good leader should be an example and role model for his associates and followers. Someone after whom they can pattern their lives. His leadership is so much more impressive and productive if the people recognise him as a person whose life demonstrates the truth and reality of their faith and vision.

A LEADER MUST BE INSPIRING, EXCITING, AND DYNAMIC.

The early Apostles were charismatic leaders, empowered and endued by the dynamic energy of the Holy Spirit. The events of Pentecost, (Acts 2) radically changed their lives and enhanced their leadership potential. Before the events of Pentecost they were disciples (apprentices). But after the dynamic experience of Pentecost they emerged as influential leaders who would eventually reach many parts of the world with the good news of Christ's redemption.

Those early Apostles demonstrated true charismatic leadership. The word "charismatic" refers in its original meaning to the endowment of spiritual gifts. In recent times the word has been adopted by the secular world to describe someone with powerful personality and leadership qualities. This later usage of the word could also be legitimately applied to Christian leaders too. Christian leaders need to be charismatic figures in both senses of the word. Endowed with spiritual gifts and having dynamic aura of leadership upon their life.

It is interesting to observe the personality enhancement that took place after the Pentecostal phenomena. All the Apostles emerged as more powerful and dynamic persons than previously but possibly none more noticeably than Peter. After his triple denial of Christ it might have seemed that he had failed dismally in his leadership aspirations but God not only forgave and restored him, He actually enriched and enhanced his leadership capabilities far beyond his original potential. The same dynamic of the Spirit is available to leaders today. God is raising up an army of leaders who are anointed and empowered by His Spirit. Jesus promised, "you shall receive power (Greek: *"dunamis"*) of the Spirit upon you." The true dynamic of a Christian group should not emanate from its leadership but from the Holy Spirit. The whole group, leaders and workers, should be energised by the power of the Spirit. The anointing is, "a dynamic force, emanating from the Spirit, which draws the entire group into effective involvement and activity."

An absence of adequate positive leadership allows lethargy to dissipate accomplishment energy, but dynamic leadership skills will inspire and maintain that momentum. This force is projected in numerous ways, but is usually most noticeable in the senior leader. It is a leadership charisma, an anointing or spirit which is frequently "caught" by the team. It inspires confidence, excites the imagination, and motivates the latent energies of the team.

HOW DO WE GENERATE A POSITIVE FORCE?

A: PREACH A POSITIVE, BIBLE-ORIENTED MESSAGE.

The Bible is filled with both negative and positive statements and we need to be mindful of both. Unfortunately many churches major on the negatives and always view the positive with suspicion and reserve. To generate a positive result we must adopt a positive outlook and major on it. As the old popular song says, we should "accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative."

Unless we adopt a positive outlook and emphasis we will never accomplish anything. Do not be afraid of taking a positive posture. God is positive. The Gospel is positive. The Bible is positive. Faith is positive.

B: ALLOW THE DYNAMIC HOLY SPIRIT TO OPERATE.

The Holy Spirit has the most dynamic force in the universe. If we allow Him to have control of our lives, He will manifest His dynamic through us. The Church of Jesus Christ, through the Kingdom rule of God, is destined to rule the nations. God is about to revive His people and renew His dynamic power and wonders in the earth. We must allow the Holy Spirit to take his rightful place in the Body of Christ. "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord (is Lord!) is there is liberty. But we all with open face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:17-18). When we allow the Holy Spirit to truly be Lord, He transforms us by His mighty power.

LEADERS MUST ALWAYS BE "UP FRONT".

Whenever the Children of Israel were journeying, the Levites were always 2,000 cubits ahead of the people. God ordained that the Priesthood, the spiritual leaders of His people, should go before them to lead the way. He specified that they should march 2,000 cubits ahead of the tribes of Israel. They should be out in front of the people to give the lead and set the pace that the people

must follow. But not so far ahead that they were out of sight. This is extremely important principles in Christian leadership. **We need to stay ahead of the people but not become remote from them.**

There are numerous traits and characteristics evidenced in the lives of good leaders which help to keep them in the eyes of the people and to give them something to emulate and follow. In doing so the people are enabled to walk in the ways of God, and they also develop characteristics which help to develop them as leaders too.

FEATURES WHICH KEEP YOU “UP FRONT”:

POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND BEARING.

People will want to follow someone who obviously knows where he is going. Someone who is decisive, with a definite purpose and a determination to accomplish a worthy task. They look to the leader who has a positive attitude and bearing. One who is clearly recognised as a true leader and is definitely going places.

INTEGRITY AND ETHICS.

It is essential that a leader be a person of integrity, honest and trustworthy, with a strong moral and ethical standard that he faithfully observes. Not a legalistic person who is a stickler for the letter of the law, but a real person who lives by the very spirit of that law. A person in whom Jesus is obviously living and through whom He is manifesting His pure life. Paul said that, “the letter of the Law kills, but the spirit (of it) gives life.” (2 Cor. 3:6).

SINCERITY AND HONESTY.

Sincerity is an essential quality in a leader. Like love it can “cover a multitude of sins.” Sincerity is the opposite of hypocrisy. Even when a person makes a mistake, if they have done it out of a spirit of sincerity, it is usually excusable. People can easily sense sincerity. It is something which it is difficult to portray if it is not genuine.

STRENGTH AND CONTROL. (Personal, and with people)

Weaknesses are never respected, and particularly not in a leader. A leader must possess and display strength in order to win the respect of his followers. This strength must first be evident in his own personal life. If a man is not strong and decisive with himself, he will never be like that with others.

He must exercise strength and control in his own personal life, habits, temperament and behaviour. A person who has never managed to discipline himself properly is hardly likely to be able to inspire strength in others. His personal strength and control should be evident in his personal appearance, punctuality and consistency. It must also be evident in the manner in which he conducts his family affairs and the orderliness of his household. The Scriptures ask, “For if a man does not know how to rule over his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. 3:5).

GENUINE INTEREST IN PEOPLE.

The ministry is really a “people industry”, and the ability to relate to people well is a vital necessity. The ministry is really about two things. It is about God, and it is about people. It is therefore a tremendous advantage to have a disposition which can freely and easily relate to all kinds of people.

FRIENDLINESS AND APPROACHABILITY.

Long before the famous book entitled, “How to win friends and influence people,” was written, the Bible said, “He who would have friends must show himself to be friendly.” (Prov. 18:24) Jesus was often called, “A friend of publicans and sinners.” He was always so approachable that multitude of people gravitated towards Him to enjoy and benefit from the warmth of His personality and friendship. No matter how successful you may become as a Christian leader, don’t ever allow your success to alienate you from the people. If you are to be genuinely Christ-like you will always be a friendly and approachable person.

GOOD-LISTENER.

Jesus frequently encouraged dialogue and conversation. He asked questions and then listened when people responded and replied to Him. There are times when simply to listen to a person is to pay them the highest compliment they desire and when an unwillingness to listen is an extremely hurtful thing. Unfortunately many leaders feel that they have become too important to quietly listen to others. They become so accustomed to speaking themselves that they lose the art of listening to others.

ATTRACTIVE AND ADMIRABLE PERSONALITY.

In any kind of public relations role an attractive and winsome personality is a distinct advantage. Obviously the ministry is much more than merely a public relations exercise and its success depends on matters infinitely more important than good human relationships. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of inter-personal relationship transpiring within any close community, including a church, and the ability to attract, win, and inspire people is essential. This is usually more easily accomplished when the leader has an attractive, friendly and winsome personality. It is certainly an advantage when the leader is admired and people find it easy to like him. It is a distinct advantage when people find it easy to relate to and follow their leader.

DEVELOPING YOUR LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS.

EXPRESSING YOUR LEADERSHIP AUTHORITY STRENGTH.

Leaders must know how to express their authority. A leaderless group drifts into anarchy. Leaders must be able to positively assert their authority without antagonising or alienating their subordinates. Their use of authority must always be done with a combination of humility and strength.

LEADERS MUST INITIATE AND MAINTAIN ACTION.

True leaders are activators. They initiate action and inspire others to join them and to maintain the initiative. Good leaders have the ability to get things going and to keep them going until the task is completed. Effective leadership gets things done through inspiring and coordinating the efforts of others.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHAIN AUTHORITY.

Matt. 8:9, "I also am a man under authority." You must "stay under authority" in order to effectively exercise it. The centurion is an excellent example of someone who thoroughly understood the chain of authority and how it functioned. He understood the authority that was over his life and the manner in which the authority gave him power over his subordinates.

We must stay under our authority source if we are to expect the people to remain under our authority. Our real authority stems from God who has ordained us, but in order for that authority to remain legitimate we must also live under those authority sources that God has placed over our lives.

IV. UNDERSTANDING AUTHORITY SOURCES.

The three main sources of authority are:

a) ROLE AUTHORITY. (The power which goes with the job)

Since our task has been appointed by God, He is the ultimate source of our authority to perform that task. Our authority is not in our title. We may be known as Doctor, Reverend, Pastor, or some other title, but our real authority is much higher than this. We may be ordained by some denomination, or appointed by our denomination to some executive role, but our real authority source is still God Himself. It is therefore vital that we continue in right relationship to our authority source. Stay in right relationship with God. Live in harmony with His Word and the powers that He has ordained. While you remain under God's authority, He will back your authority. If you move out from under the covering of His authority through pride or disobedience, then His authority will no longer be operative through your life.

b) KNOWLEDGE POWER. (Deriving power from knowledge, skills, etc.)

A mature and adequate understanding of your task and its performance lends a certain degree of authority. If it is obvious that you know what you are doing, then people will feel more comfortable to join you in the fulfillment of the job. If they can see from the results you accomplish that you really know what you are doing they will more readily recognise, acknowledge and honour your leadership authority. Acknowledged competence generates confidence, both in the leader, and his team.

c) PERSONALITY POWER. (Your personal influence)

This is undoubtedly the least important of the three authority sources, but it is still extremely effective and worthy of development. I am speaking of the authority that is generated by a leader who projects modest, positive, confidence. Someone who obviously has quiet confidence in themselves and in what they are doing. A leader who conveys the impression of having everything under competent control. Most people need to have a feeling of security, and competent leadership helps to give them such a feeling.

Personality carries its own degree of influence. A lively, colourful, engaging person is better able to influence others than is a grim, unimaginative one. The proper development of personality power is certainly a legitimate and desirable one. God is the designer of your personality. He put together the various facts which determined your personality type. But He expects you to develop and improve your personality and to positively utilise its potential and influence. You are a singular person with a unique personality. God has chosen YOU for a specific role. He wants to use YOU, and your unique and special talents and personality to accomplish some things that no one else could perform in exactly the same way.

How to use these sources of power?

USING ROLE POWER EFFECTIVELY.

Moses is a prime example of this.

- He recognised his own limitations.
- He would not go, except God went with him.
- He exercised authority with meekness.

USING KNOWLEDGE POWER.

Never stop learning, and increasing your skills. "Study to show yourself approved unto God." 2 Tim. 2:15.

USING PERSONALITY POWER.

Learn to be "Yourself, in Jesus."

EXERCISING YOUR AUTHORITY.

There are sensitive and insensitive ways to communicate your authority. One is as damaging as the other is productive. Effective and successful leaders are generally those who have learned how to use their authority in a manner which enhances their leadership and does not antagonise or alienate their co-workers. You must seek to establish your image of authority in numerous ways.

COMMUNICATE STRENGTH THROUGH IMAGE PROJECTION.

Every leader is responsible for the image which they project and must endeavour to develop a legitimate authority image which people can willingly respect. If you don't act like a leader, then you cannot blame the people for not responding to you properly as their leader.

SPEAK AND ACT WITH HUMBLE AUTHORITY.

Authority actions should always be projected with a measure of humility. Many people have an aversion to apparent arrogance on the part of their leaders. They will gladly respond with respect and submission if they sense that their leaders are not endeavouring to "lord it over them." Authority exercised with arrogance can easily produce the opposite of the desired effect.

STAND STRONG ON YOUR DECISIONS.

Effective leadership demands strong decision making without which people often have an insecurity because they don't really know what is happening. Once decisions are made and announced they should be adhered to unless there arises some good reasons why it should be changed. This should not occur too frequently. Decisions which have to be changed were usually bad ones and too many poor decisions destroy people's confidence in their leadership.

DISCIPLINE VIOLATORS IN PRIVATE SESSION.

Every leader will have occasions when correction and discipline need to be administered to some team member. If possible, this must never be done in public. Any correction or reprimand must be given in a private session. However, if their violation has been in public, they should also be warned that any further violations may be dealt with publicity.

CONDUCT FREQUENT GROUP MEETINGS IN WHICH YOU ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION BUT SHOW THAT YOU ARE IN CHARGE.

Your leadership authority should firstly be exercised in such setting as staff meetings, where the group is small and somewhat intimate. This enables you to rectify attitudes and actions in a small group rather than having to do it in a large public group where unnecessary embarrassment might be felt.

VI: KNOWING WHEN AND WHERE TO "DRAW THE LINE".

Always make sure that God is with you in your exercise of authority. We are exhorted, "Whatsoever you do, in word or deed, do everything as unto the Name of the Lord." As God is the ultimate source of our authority, we should always exercise it in keeping with the good honour of His Name. The leader has no power except that which is given him by God, so he must always discharge that authority under the awareness of God's Name and His righteousness.

Never try to force people to follow your leadership. In the Middle East, where the Bible was written, eastern shepherds always lead their sheep (going in front of them) and never drive them (from behind). Jesus was such a shepherd, and we must be too.

ALWAYS GIVE GOD ALL THE CREDIT AND GLORY.

Chapter Seven - THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF A LEADER

This chapter is the most important one in this study. It holds the key to truly authentic Christian leadership which is to develop in our relationship with Christ and that our service for Him must be as the fruit of that right relationship. It is only out a healthy relationship with Him that we can truly serve Christ. Service without relationship will be mechanical, loveless and legalistic, and as such is unacceptable to God.

Other chapters deal with various aspects of leadership skills and these are certainly important. But the proper development of our spiritual man is absolutely vital and indispensable. It is foundational to the fulfillment of our calling.

If we examine the methods which Jesus employed with His disciples we shall see that His primary concern was the development of their spiritual lives. Early in His relationship with them He expounded the powerful truths of the implications of true Kingdom living. In what we frequently call, "The sermon on the mount" (Matt. Chapters 5- 7), He clearly expounded the criteria required for all who would be His disciples. He emphasised the radical difference between their old life-style and that of their new life as members of the Kingdom of God and of Jesus Christ.

The effective leader's first responsibility is the healthy development and continuing growth of his own life in God. Under the Levitical pattern of the Mosaic Covenant the priests were required to be 2,000 cubits ahead of the people whenever the nation was moving on in the purposes of God. In the same manner of Christian leader must be out in front of the people as an example and guide for

them to follow. His spiritual development and consequent life-style, must ever be a model for them. It has been frequently said that, “God can never grow a church bigger than its leader”, and to some degree this is true. So the leader’s first concern is not “how to make my church grow”, but “how to ensure that my own spiritual life is in good order and that I am constantly growing in the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ.” If the life of the leader is faulty, the very foundations of that church are undermined.

One of the issues of which the leader must be constantly aware, is the danger of professionalism, i.e. allowing the ministry to degenerate from a spiritual calling to a secular profession. It is easy to become so involved in the mechanics of leading a church that one’s personal spiritual life is sorely neglected. The sad lament of the Shulamite was, “They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept.” (Songs of Sol. 1: 6b). This simple statement emphasises an “occupational hazard” of the ministry. The danger of becoming so busy tending to the spiritual lives of others that one’s own spiritual life is tragically neglected. I feel sure that this treacherous trap has brought about the downfall of many leaders. Effective leaders must never allow themselves to become so absorbed in pursuing the demands of the ministry that they are forced to neglect their own spiritual welfare.

Leadership skills and management abilities are very important, but the Christian leader’s spiritual life is foundational, and this is where he either stands or falls. The leader’s spiritual intake must always exceed his output. The ultimate purpose of our spiritual exercises is to develop our relationship with Christ, to grow into His likeness, and to be equipped for His service.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I approach the spiritual exercises which are indispensable to the maintenance and development of the leader’s life. These disciplines are essential as aids to the development of our personal relationship with Christ. The pursuit and practice of them in itself are inadequate and insufficient. It must never be allowed to degenerate into a formality or religious routine. The point of these exercises is not to fulfil one’s duty in reading the Bible or praying. It is to spend quality time with our Master and to keep our relation with Him living and vital.

PRAYER.

Most Christians and many leaders have pre-conceived ideas about prayer. The most prevalent one is that, “Prayer is talking to God.” This is a treacherous idea because it is partly, but not fully, true. Yes, prayer is talking with God, but it is also listening to God! In fact it is actually “communing with God.” -Talking with Him, pouring out your heart to Him, sharing all your concerns with Him, but also listening to His response.

We must constantly remember that what God says to us is always far more important than anything that we can say to Him. Prayer is a two-way conversation that involves listening as well as speaking. Avoid the idea of coming before God with your particular agenda, unloading it into His ears, and then feeling that you have prayed. Prayer is essentially mutual communion. It is spending quality time with God as with a trusted and beloved friend. It is sometimes called, “Seeking the face of God.” “When you said, seek My face, my heart said to You, Your face LORD will I seek.” (Ps. 27:8)

This is delightful and quaint expression which signifies the seeking out of a loved one in order to spend time with the object of your heart’s affection. It is like a young man pursuing a courtship. Seeking every opportunity to catch a glimpse of the face of his beloved. Contriving circumstances and making opportunities to be together with the one who is his heart’s delight. The heart’s desire is to gaze on the face of the loved one, but also to “catch the eye” of the lover. Our relationship with God is actually a romance which we need to pursue with affection and enthusiasm. Keeping this aspect of our relationship alive and vital should always be a major concern and pursuit, for out of this love relationship come the whispered endearments and lover’s secrets that constitute the unveiling of the Father’s heart. It is in this very context and environment that our spiritual life flourishes and out of this enrichment flows authentic ministry.

True prayer also involves waiting on God. “I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His Word I put my trust.” (Ps. 130:5). This suggests the attitude of a servant who waits patiently on his Master, to learn the desires and wishes of his Master’s heart. This is an ideal image of the true servant of

God. Waiting on the Master's Will in order to carry out His desires, and to convey His purposes to His people. This is the authentic place in which to receive ministry charges and missions. Yet this is not the primary reasons for our being there. Our first concern is to commune with the Lord, to seek His face, to worship and adore Him, but also to receive from Him the messages He would have us convey to those to whom we are called to minister.

LIVING BY THE WORD OF GOD.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds, (or which is proceeding) out the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4). Jesus quoted these words from Deut. 8:3. His purpose was to show that it is better to obey the Word of God than to satisfy our human desires. However, there are two other thoughts I want to point out to you:

a. The words by which we should live are the current, living Words of God. The words of present truth, which are proceeding out of the mouth of God. God has present words of truth that He wants to convey to us. Words which are specifically appropriate to us in the circumstances in which we currently find ourselves. We sometimes refer to this as the "Rhema" Word of God, as distinct from the "Logos", the word which is always current and always present tense.

b. It is the words which proceed out of the MOUTH of God. These words are received by our spiritual ears. They are not words that we read, but words which we hear. Now we may actually be reading the Bible when God speaks to us in this way. It is as though He suddenly underlines something, drawing our attention forcibly to it, and speaking a current, applicable word into your spirit. This is the "Rhema" word by which we are to live.

It is also extremely important that leaders be "men the Word." Lovers, readers, students, and practisers of God's Word. "How sweet are Your Words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through your precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way." (Ps. 119: 103-104).

We must also be aware of another occupational hazard of the ministry. I refer to the danger of beginning to treat the Bible just as a source of sermon material, approaching the Scriptures with the idea that they are simply filled with sermons which we may preach to our congregation. If we have this attitude it is all too possible to apply God's Word to His people, but not primarily to ourselves. This is extremely dangerous and can lead to our having double standards about the application of God's Word. One standard for the people, and another for ourselves.

We must constantly give priority to our own spiritual need to grow and worship. Our personal spiritual life needs constant and consistent attention. Paul was ever conscious of an treacherous danger. "But I discipline my flesh and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." (1 Cor. 9:27).

LIVING IN THE SPIRIT.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:25). Living in the Spirit is not an exotic little diversion from the authentic pathway of our Christian faith. It is not an interesting optional extra for the enjoyment of the mystically inclined. Living in the Spirit is the authentic, Biblical way of living the Christian life. It is the New Testament concept of the Christian life-style that God wants all His people to live. Its roots are firmly planted in the soil of God's Word. It is the life style which both Jesus and the Apostles lived, and is as legitimate to Christianity as they are.

Like many other things it is an art to be learned and imbibed. The only way to learn to live this way is by putting the principles into practice and learning by experience. (and by your mistakes) Stay humble, confess your errors to the Lord, and experience His forgiveness and restoration. He will help you to adjust your walk and He will encourage you to further adventures as you endeavour to faithfully follow His Spirit.

Living in the Spirit is learning to live by your spiritual senses instead of your natural senses. The natural man lives by his natural senses of which there are five, i.e. smell, taste, touch, sight, and hearing. Man lives by these senses because his spiritual senses are dead. When we come to Christ,

He “quickens” us into life and our spiritual man awakens. Instead of living any longer by our five natural senses and what they tell us, we begin to live by faith, and by what God tells us.

HUMILITY.

Humility is primarily an attitude of heart and mind. A modest appraisal of one’s abilities and importance. It is also an attitude of meekness and lowliness of mind. Nothing can induce an attitude of humility more effectively than a clear awareness of the greatness of God. King David was a person who retained a meek and humble spirit. As a teenager he had been humble and when later he rose to become king of Israel, he still retained a beautiful humility of spirit. I feel sure that this was largely due to his awareness of God’s greatness and of his own insignificance compared with it. “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers. The moon and the stars which You have ordained. What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that you consider him?” (Ps. 8:4).

It is difficult for God to use and bless someone who is not humble, because the tendency is for them to take the glory to themselves, and God will not share His glory with another. “All of you be submissive one to another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the appropriate time.” (1 Pet. 5:5- 6).

Pride is totally unacceptable in a servant of God because that person would be able to accomplish absolutely nothing without God’s grace and favour. Success may come through effort, skills and persistence in any other realm of life. But in the work of God, we are totally and absolutely dependent upon Him. The servant of God should flee from pride as though it were his worst enemy. God issues numerous warnings about the dangers which lie in the path of the proud.

“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride, and arrogance.” (Prov. 8: 13)

“When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.” (Prov. 11:2)

“By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well advised is wisdom.” (Prov. 13:10)

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” (Prov. 16: 18- 19)

FAITH.

“But without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to Him must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” (Heb. 11: 6). Every believer must be a person of faith but leaders in particular must be men or women of strong faith. The work of God cannot be accomplished without the exercise of faith. Every project we attempt for God is a project of faith, and the leader must be a person of faith in order to challenge, stimulate, and encourage the faith of everyone concerned.

The faith of which we are speaking is essentially faith in God and in His Word. In order to exercise this kind of faith we first need a specific word from God on which to base our faith. The faith required in Christian leadership is not blind faith, or faith in oneself, or one’s abilities. True faith is a positive response and action to a specific word from God. If God tells you to do something, you assume that He will accomplish the tasks through you as you act in obedience to His instructions. Job said, “He performs the task is appointed unto me.” (Job 23: 14).

True faith in God is never irresponsible or presumptuous. It does not simply pluck huge ideas out of the air and say, “I am going to believe God for this!” A person of faith does not conjure up his own big plans and then believe God to bless them. Real faith begins when God gives the Word. It is the response of positive obedience to a specific word from God.

The person of faith must lead the way. He must be a constant example of what faith in God is all about. He is the man who hears from God. The man who is able to receive the directions which the Lord gives. He is the man who conceives the appropriate response to God’s word of command. He is the one who inspires the faith of all who are involved in fulfilling the project.

Nehemiah was just such a person. From the moment that he sensed God’s challenge to do something about the sad conditions of Jerusalem, he began to respond in faith. He began to make appropriate plans. Recruiting personnel, raising finances, evolving strategies, organising the work force. He was personally involved in every aspect of the work, yet he is also an excellent example

of effective delegation too. The Book of Nehemiah has many vital lessons to teach about effective, godly leadership. It presents a powerful example of efficiency and effectiveness. Please read through the book with this in mind. Make notes about all the principles of organisation, administration and leadership skills, which you discover in it.

SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

Effective leadership, in any sphere of life, depends to a large degree on making right decisions. A young executive once had the opportunity of speaking with an older, experienced, and eminently successful entrepreneur. He eagerly asked him, “Sir, what is the secret of success?” “Making right decisions”, the older man replied. “And how do you learn to make right decisions?”, the younger man asked. “Experience!”, the older man stated. “Well how do you gain experience?”, the young man persisted. “Through making wrong decisions”, was the successful man’s reply.

Making right decisions is also a principle of success in the realm of Christian leadership, but the ability to do this does not have to be the result of making many wrong decisions. The development of spiritual discernment should be the main source of our right decisions. In God’s work we cannot afford to experiment with our decision making. We cannot risk making wrong decisions, for we are responsible for the work which bears the Name of the Lord, and to some degree His Name is at stake. There is a real danger that our mistakes may negatively affect God’s Name and people’s perceptions of Him. So we must exercise the utmost care to ensure that we do not make the kind of mistakes which will adversely reflect on God’s integrity.

The way to arrive at the right decisions is to ensure that all our plans are laid out before God and that we maintain an open heart and mind towards His response. We need to spread our plans before Him as Hezekiah spread before God the letter he received and wait before God for His guidance and direction. (2 Kings 19:14 – 19). As servants of God we have a solemn charge to honour and exalt the Name of the Lord. So we cannot afford the luxury of making too many mistakes. Particularly if those mistakes are serious, far reaching, and damaging to the work of God.

OBEDIENCE.

“To obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen (to God) is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion (the opposite of obedience) is like witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” (1 Sam. 15:22- 23). God places great importance on obedience. This is because the work of the ministry, the task of the Church, the building of the Kingdom, is ALL GOD’S WORK. HE IS THE SUPREME HEAD OF ALL. Therefore every aspect of it must come from His initiative, and every action on our part must be a result of our OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMAND. Any alternative to this is unthinkable. God calls it rebellion and stubbornness, and states that in His sight it is the same as witchcraft, iniquity, and idolatry.

Chapter Eight - INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Effective leadership requires good inter-personal relationships. A leader must relate effectively to his leadership team and to his “followers.” Jesus provides the classic example of this in His relationship with His disciples. A vital aspect of leadership is the skilful management of people, for people are the leader’s greatest resource.

The effective leader needs:

PEOPLE.

When is a leader not a leader? – When no one follows him!

A leader should not be judged on his leadership skills, but on the quality of his followers.

Jesus carefully chose twelve disciples.

He took His time in selecting them.

He recognised their potential for leadership.

He spent quality time with them.

He shared His life with them.

They learned by association with Him.

It is both interesting and challenging to consider the strategy which Jesus chose. His mission was to redeem the world and then to fill the world with the Good News of His redemption. It is fascinating to observe just how He went about the latter part. It is intriguing to witness how He spent the major part of His ministry training twelve disciples. His example in this regard emphasises the importance of discipling potential leaders.

Dr. Billy Graham, who has probably preached the Gospel to more people than anyone in history, was once asked if he would do anything differently were he given the chance to live his life again. His reply was extremely interesting. He said that if he were given a chance to live his life and pursue his ministry again, he would concentrate on training twelve men, pouring his life and everything he knew into them.

The leader's primary task should be to train other leaders!!! One man cannot hope to effectively shepherd several hundred persons. He needs associates, assistants, co-workers, and under-shepherds. By recruiting and training such people the leader multiplies his potential enormously. So a good senior pastor will concentrate on shepherding his pastoral team and they in turn will shepherd the larger flock. (the congregation).

Every individual leader has their limitation level depending on the particular giftings they have. For example, a particular pastor may have the ability to successfully shepherd 100 persons. Once he reaches that number of members he may gain a few more members and lose a few, but the congregation will usually remain around the 100 persons mark. How may he break through that barrier? One obvious way is to improve his skills in preaching, teaching, administration and general leadership. This may enable him to reach the 150 membership mark. But by far the better method is to find other ministers whose gifting and ability complement his own. For instance, the senior pastor may have an effective evangelistic ministry, but is not a good shepherd. He wins many people to Christ, but he is not able to hold them. So he needs to find someone with a strong gift of shepherding. The combination of these giftings may raise the potential to some 300 members. If the right combination of other giftings are also added, the potential number of people they can effectively care for may rise dramatically.

HE TAUGHT THEM BY ASSOCIATION.

The disciples of Jesus learned an enormous amount from just being with Him. They listened to everything He said, and observed everything He did. This is a classic case of learning from one's mentor. The disciples learned so much simply by associating with Jesus. Much of what they learned would have been sub-consciously imbibed. They did not have formal class room education. Their training was "hands on" – "In service training"; "On-the-job". They learned through the spiritual teaching style of Jesus which was a "learning by doing"- style. Jesus did many things in the presence of His disciples. They observed how He did them and later He asked them to do the same things. Some has described the process in this simple manner.

I do it, and you observe me.

I do it, and you help me.

You do it and I help you.

You do it, and I observe you.

You do it, and someone else observes you.

HE SHOWED THEM HOW TO OPERATE.

Jesus provided "on the job" training for His disciples. He demonstrated every aspect of His ministry to them. They learned as they observed Him, and then He required that they do as He had taught them. This is the style which will work most efficiently for us too. It is a style of leadership that many pastors find to be tedious and extremely demanding. Some find it difficult to share their role and tasks with others. They prefer to be "Lone Rangers", holding the leadership role to themselves. But this autocratic style of leadership in which the leader functions in isolation from his brethren, has no place in the Biblical scheme of leadership. It is filled with limitations and

hidden dangers. It lacks the checks and balances which true team ministry can offer, and leaves the solo leader exposed to dangers which could not overtake him if he had the protection of close peers. The pattern that Jesus used and demonstrated is the most productive. He gathered disciples around Him and shared His life with them. In doing so He demonstrated the Kingdom style of accomplishing the purpose of God. He showed His disciples how to do the work of the Kingdom and then commissioned them to do the same works.

HE ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES TO THEM.

Jesus said, "Give them something to eat." (Matt. 14:16). Jesus did not assign titles, designations, and offices to His disciples; He assigned responsibilities. He gave them tasks to accomplish. When the multitudes were ready to faint with hunger and the disciples brought this to the attention of Jesus, He put the challenge squarely before them. "They do not need to go away", He said, "YOU give them something to eat." With His help and blessing they were able to feed thousands of people. What an experience for the disciples. What a thrill at the end of the day when they were able to look back on such an accomplishment.

Thus, "When you are recruiting personnel, always look for the people who are reaching for responsibilities, not the ones who are looking for authority." I have also found this to be a helpful criteria. If you have staff who are eager to take responsibilities and the work which goes with it, you will always have conscientious and hard working people. But if you recruit people who are keen on position and titles and the authority that goes with them, you frequently find these people are not interested in hard work.

HE DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THEM.

Responsibility should always come before authority. Authority is conferred to enable someone to effectively discharge their responsibilities. The authority which Jesus conferred was the authority of His Name. When He sent out the disciples into all the world, He delegated to them a great responsibility, to preach the Gospel in all the world and to every creature. Then conferred on them His authority, "In My Name, they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." (Mark 16:15 – 18).

This is the authority which goes along with the job. The authority to do what Jesus has told us to do. Going into all the world, preaching the Gospel to every creature, making disciples of all nations, establishing the Church and His Kingdom throughout the earth. We are to do this "in His Name", i.e. because it is what He has commanded.

HE IMPARTED POWER TO THEM.

Jesus also gave power to His disciples, "Wait in Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." (Luke 24: 49). It is the power of the Spirit which enables us to do the works which Jesus did, and which He commissioned His disciples to perform. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil for God was with Him." (Acts 10: 38). "Most assuredly I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." (John 14: 12)

HE SUPERVISED THEIR ACTIVITIES.

As Jesus and His disciples traveled together throughout the land. He constantly observed and monitored their activities. He was their Overseer. He also closely monitored their attitudes as they undertook their various activities, frequently correcting and admonishing them to maintain the right spirit.

HE CHECKED AND CORRECTED THEIR WORK.

On many occasions Jesus had to correct His disciples. Sometimes He needed to actually rebuke them, which He did quite forcibly. It was usually their attitudes which He needed to correct, rather than the actual work they did. But attitudes are extremely important in God's work.

In spite of the fact that He frequently had to correct and adjust His disciples, Jesus always did this in a manner which was ultimately positive and productive. He was able to administer correction

and rebuke in a manner which did not discourage or break their spirits but brought them into proper alignment. Generally people will rise to the level of your expectations of them. Jesus expected and received the very highest from them.

HE REQUIRED THEM TO REPRODUCE.

Everyone who is discipled is expected to disciple someone else later. In fact the ultimate test of how well one has been trained is to observe how well their disciples perform. “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” 2 Tim. 2:2.

SOME ATTITUDES HE INCULCATED (impressed on their mind) INTO THEM:

HUMILITY.

Jesus was a constant example of humility to His disciples. He taught this vital truth by example and precept. God has a favourable disposition towards the humble in heart. He loathes pride, and the proud in heart, but He gives abundant mercy and grace to the humble. Pride comes before a fall, but humility precedes promotion in the Kingdom of God.

UNITY.

“If any two of you shall agree, (*“symphoneo”*) on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.” (Matt. 18:19). God is a unity, a plurality, and He loves and blesses unity. (Ps. 133) He insists on unity amongst a team of leaders and will not bless a situation in which there is dis-unity and dis-loyalty.

MORALE.

In an individual, morale speaks of being in good spirits, full of positive anticipation and excitement about the future. Someone who is excited and eager to get involved in the project before them.

In terms of a company of people, it includes all of the above but has the added concept of a vital unity, oneness, confidence in the united ability of the company. It is an attitude which is highly prized in a military situation. When one speaks of the morale of the troops it means that they are confident, secure, positive and that this mood is common to all of them. They have a sense of confidence about the united ability of their army or battalion. This is often called the, “Esprit de Corps.” The spirit of unity, oneness, harmony, inter-dependence and mutual esteem. This is the kind of spirit which Jesus sought to impress on the mind of His disciples and which He wants to see amongst Christian leaders today.

Chapter Nine - DECISION MAKING

Good leadership depends to a large degree on making right decisions. Every leader is constantly faced with the need to make decisions and his ultimate effectiveness depends to a great extent on getting a high percentage of them right. An effective leader must be a good decision-maker, his effectiveness depends largely on this important issue.

SOME ENEMIES OF DECISION MAKING:

FEAR OF FAILURE.

Every potential leader has had to face and deal with a fear of failure. The person who has never had such a problem is probably too self confident and in danger of a “fall.” (Prov. 16: 18). Most great leaders in the Bible had to overcome this fear, and then God took them on to tremendous accomplishments.

INADEQUATE INFORMATION.

One important key to making the right decisions is to get as much information as possible on the issue at hand. Good decisions can never be made from inadequate information. This is particularly true when the decisions involve solving disputes between opposing parties. When the decision involves a judgement in favour of one party and against a second party, take time to ensure that you

have all the available facts and information. Never make such a decision from a biased perspective, for this can lead to a serious undermining of your credibility.

LACK OF CONFIDENCE.

Don't be afraid of a lack of self-confidence in decision making. Many of our decisions are far reaching, affecting the lives of many people. A certain lack of self-confidence introduces a note of caution and can be a healthy thing if it ultimately helps us to make a better decision. A lack of confidence should persuade you to do several important things:

Exercise more caution.

Pray more earnestly.

Seek God's wisdom more fervently. (James 1:5 – 7)

Consult your trusted counselors. (Prov. 11: 14)

THE TENDENCY TO PUT THINGS OFF.

Lack of self-confidence and a sense of personal insecurity can make decision making a frightening and burdensome responsibility. A classic response to such feelings is a tendency to delay making the decision, but constantly delaying the decision can cause the issue to become more confusing then ever.

Important decisions should never be made in a hurry. Sometimes the best decision one can make is to "sleep on the matter." However, there are often small decisions which a lack of self-confidence can persuade us to delay. Delay is not only the thief of time, it is the perpetuator of confusion. Small decisions can pile up until they overwhelm one. In the normal running of your program try to keep up with decisions. Don't let them get on top of you.

IMPORTANT DECISIONS DESERVE CONSULATATION.

"Where there is no counsel, the people fall, (fail) but in the multitude of counselors You is safety." (Prov. 11: 14). "For by wise counsel you will win your war, and in the multitude of counselors there is safety." (Prov. 24: 6). Paul says: "But WE, (plural) have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 2:16). It is extremely risky for an individual to claim to "have the mind of Christ", particularly if he is part of a community which does not agree with his judgement in the matter. It is much safer to seek the mind of Christ corporately and to arrive at a conclusion which can claim that "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to US." (Acts 15: 28).

Pride and deceit are two common reasons why some leaders refuse to seek godly counsel from their peers. Big decisions, particularly those which radically affect the lives of other persons, are always worthy of corporate confirmation. Any leader who persists in pursuing a project against the advice of the majority of his friends and counselors, is in danger of being deceived into undertaking a project that is doomed to failure.

MAKING GOOD DECISIONS:

GATHER ALL THE AVAILABLE FACTS.

This should not be done in the manner of a "detective agency", but from an attitude of thoroughness and in fairness to all concerned. It must not be undertaken in a legalistic manner, but with grace and graciousness.

EVALUATE AND INTERPRET THEM CORRECTLY AND FAIRLY.

God is always portrayed in the Bible as a gracious and merciful judge, as well as One whose judgement is utterly reliable. Abraham said, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do that which is right?" It was a rhetorical question which was a statement, rather than a question. It was really stating that it was impossible for the One who had fashioned the universe, to make a mistake. Obviously our humanity precludes us from being as reliable as God. Nevertheless, as servants and representatives of God, we must always to be excellent judges, reliable, accurate and trustworthy.

GET THE FULLEST POSSIBLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE.

I am referring here to “the wisdom which comes from above”. (James 3:17). “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” This kind of wisdom is available to all who sincerely desire it. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him, but let him ask in faith without doubting because the double-minded man will receive nothing from the Lord.” (James 1:5-7).

Bringing the wisdom of God into a situation, and getting His mind on the matter, is essential. We are ordained in God’s Name, to bring His judgement to situations. We must always seek to make important decisions with His imparted wisdom.

MAKE IT A MATTER OF FERVENT, PATIENT PRAYER.

Never rush into a decision too hastily. Don’t ever feel that an important decision must be made in such haste that you do not have time to pray about it. Many mistakes are made through proceeding too hastily.

LAY THE WHOLE MATTER BEFORE THE LORD.

“And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the House of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.” (2 Kings 19: 14). Make sure that you consciously lay the whole matter before God in the sense of committing it to Him in faith, prayer, and spiritual communion. As you do so, wait before Him to receive His response and impressions into your spirit.

DETERMINE TO GET THE “MIND OF THE LORD.”

Sometimes we may be so conscious of all the issues at stake, and of the various view points of people involved, plus our own natural opinion, that we neglect to truly get God’s mind on the situation. Always remember that God’s perspective is far more important than any other to the degree that if we “miss” the mind of God, we have missed the all important factor.

CONSULT CLOSE AND TRUSTED COUNSELORS.

Most decisions in the work and kingdom of God should be corporately conceived. No one person has the sole monopoly on the mind of the Lord. All important issues should be determined in concert, involving a multiple leadership who are ultimately responsible for the decisions taken.

PRAYERFULLY TRY TO VISUALISE THE RESULT.

As you pray through the situation, try to visualise in your spirit what the outcome should be in the purpose of God. If you do this prayerfully with a pure motive, you can attain a prophetic perspective. You may actually “see” in the Spirit God’s desired outcome. You can then make your decisions in the light of that, and prayerfully wait to see God bring it to pass.

Remember that:

A decision is only a “good one” if it results in achieving the desired conclusion.

A good decision will always have a practical outcome. While a decision is theoretical, it cannot yet be a good one or the right one. Correct decisions yield right results.

Good decision making involves:

- MAKING CORRECT JUDGEMENTS.
- APPLYING FIRM RESOLVE.
- APPLYING UNWAVERING COMMITMENT.
- TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION.
- ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULT.

SUMMARY:

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IS NOT SIMPLY MAKING GOOD DECISIONS, IT IS MAKING THEM WITH AUTHORITY AND DECISIVENESS.

MAKING GOOD DECISIONS SET YOU ON THE RIGHT ROAD.
MAKING MORE GOOD DECISIONS KEEPS YOU ON IT.
MAKING RIGHT DECISIONS INCREASES YOUR FOLLOWERS.
MAKING PERSONAL DECISIONS BY:

Sit down quietly, relaxed, and without pressure.
Clear all distracting elements.
Commit your thoughts to God in prayer.
Have your Bible and a note pad.
Commune with God in your spirit.
Write down everything which comes to mind.

A DECISION MAKING FORMULA:

Prayerful attitude.
Listening heart.
Decisive mind.
Determined will.
Deliberate action.

CLARITY OF THINKING.

Try to eliminate all elements of confusion.

INDECISION IS A BAD DECISION.

In moments of weakness we may sometimes think that we cannot make a decision and we therefore delay doing so. However, this in itself can often constitute a poor decision. The decision not to make a decision is in itself sometimes a bad decision. Delaying decision can become habitual with some leaders. They can rarely summon the courage to make an important decision. This is a very poor trait for a leader and one which must be overcome in order to be successful. Indecision on the part of the leadership can be extremely discouraging and confusing for the team members.

A BAD DECISION NEED NOT BE THE END OF THE MATTER.

Nobody is infallible. Everyone is capable of making a mistake sometimes but this does not need to be fatal. Always be willing to admit, "I made a wrong decision." Be humble and ready to rectify it. This attitude can actually increase confidence. You are not infallible! Nor are your associates and followers. They will forgive you and help to rectify the error if you remain humble and contrite about it.

TOO MANY WRONG DECISIONS RUIN PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE.

Whilst some mistakes may be inevitable, yet if too many are made and a leader begins to get a reputation for making bad decisions then his associates will lose faith in him as a leader. Making poor decisions will never breed confidence in your leadership authority.

THE THREE "C's" OF DECISION MAKING.

Whilst major decisions require divine wisdom there are many smaller decisions which do not require any divine revelation. Any person who assumes the role of a leader will be constantly required to make such decisions and should be able to make them reliably from his own wisdom and experience. There are three basic sources which should help in this process:

COMMON-SENSE.

This is essential for any kind of leader. Sadly we often discover that, "common sense is not so common". In other words many people are sadly lacking in this area. Make it your business to use your common sense. The more you use it, the more it will develop.

COMMITMENT.

Once you have made a decision, you should commit yourself fully to its implementation.

COURAGE.

Making the decision is only the beginning. Once committed to its fulfillment you must have the courage to complete it come what may.

Chapter Ten - THE ART OF DELEGATION

We have briefly discussed the importance of decision making and how important this is to effective leadership. The next issue which is crucial to effective leadership is that of recognising and practicing the principles of delegation. We will now turn our attention to some of the basic issues involved.

LEADERSHIP IS A GOD-GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY.

Christian leadership differs from all other types of leadership. Leaders in politics, industry, trade, or commerce, function by human abilities and skills, but Christian leadership functions in response to God given responsibility.

All leaders are under authority and answerable to someone. But Christian leaders are answerable to God.

LEADERSHIP CANNOT BE ABDICATED(Formally given up)

We know that the effective leader is a wise delegator but some things should never be delegated and the ultimate responsibility of leadership is one of them. Moses became an effective exponent of delegation but he remained the key leader of God's people Israel.

Most churches which are experiencing dramatic growth have a pastoral or ministry team and develop good team ministry principles. However, someone has to be THE leader of that team. In a church setting the senior pastor is that person. He may function with any one of a variety of models of team leadership, but he must be **at the sharp end of the leadership process.**

He is responsible, under God, to provide the inspiration and direction for the church. He may work with a Board of deacons or elders, but his ultimate responsibility is to God. In various church situations in which I have functioned as the pastor, I have often said to the Board of elders, "I will work **with** you, but not for you. God is my Master and it is to Him that I will have to answer.

However, a leader cannot and should not work alone. His personal abilities are extremely limited if he attempts to work in isolation. One of the most important skills which he must learn and practice is that of delegation, and how to build a ministry team.

Definition of Delegation:

"To entrust the performance of a task to another."

"To authorise another to act in your behalf."

The success of delegation lies in:

- Realising the need to delegate.
- Recognising those tasks which should be delegated.
- Recognising those tasks which ought not to be delegated.

There are three common attitudes in respect of delegation:

- Those who delegate nothing.
- Those who delegate everything.
- Those who know what to delegate and what not to delegate.

DELEGATION IS A BIBLICAL CONCEPT.

GOD DELEGATED HIS SON TO REDEEM MANKIND.

In the great purpose of redemption, God sent His Son into our world in His behalf, to purchase our salvation. Jesus said, "Behold, I have come to do Your Will O God." (Heb. 10:7) God delegated His Son to be our redeemer.

MOST DELEGATED THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL TO GOVERN WITH HIM.

In Exodus 18: 13 – 27, we have one of the finest explanations and examples of the principles of delegation. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, instructed his son-in-law in the necessity and art of this style of leadership. The principles which Jethro shared are still current and are used widely today in all areas of leadership including the great corporate companies of the world.

JESUS DELEGATED HIS DISCIPLES TO EVANGELISE THE WORLD.

It is an interesting exercise to observe that Jesus chose this leadership style to establish His Church and the Kingdom of God. In fact He adopted the very same principles that the Father had used in commissioning Him. "As the Father has sent Me into to the world, so send I you." I.e. in the same manner in which the Father has sent Me, I am sending you. The Father appointed Jesus to be the Redeemer of mankind. He delegated to Him the task of accomplishing redemption.

GOD HAS DELEGATED US TO FINISH THE TASK.

In similar manner Jesus has delegated His disciples to accomplish the task of proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom throughout the world. In the process of accomplishing this we must also use the process of delegation.

WISE DELEGATION INVOLVES:

APPOINTING THE RIGHT PERSON.

This may seem so obvious that it hardly requires any emphasis. Yet it is frequently obvious that persons are appointed to fulfil tasks for which they are manifestly unsuited. There are numerous reasons for this, one of which is expediency. The right person does not seem to be available, so someone else is appointed. This frequently happens because God's timing is not properly discerned.

AT THE RIGHT TIME.

God's timing in these matters is often crucial. At the right time, God usually has the right persons. We need to learn how to discern, and move with God's timing in the fulfillment of His purposes. This requires a consistent "waiting on the Lord." A sensitivity to God and an obedience which walks with Him step by step through the development of His purposes.

TO THE RIGHT TASKS.

person commissioned to the wrong task is like David trying to wear Saul's armour. It just does not fit or suit them. But once someone is slotted into the role which really their temperament and giftings, they begin to work with enthusiasm and dedication, achieving excellent results.

THE PROCESS OF DELEGATION.

Here is a brief description of the successful delegation process.

(a) SELECT AND DEFINE THE TASK.

The overall task must be divided into its various component parts. In a church situation this might include: Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Minister of Music, Minister of Evangelism, Minister of Children's Ministries, Pastoral Care, etc. There might also be an Administrator, Secretary, Treasurer, and so on. These various roles must be clearly defined, together with the various tasks which the appointee is specifically responsible for and to whom they are answerable.

(b) CHOOSE THE RIGHT PERSON(S).

The persons chosen, and appointed to the various tasks, must be:

Capable of performing the task, or of learning how to do so.

Willing to work hard in the performance of their task.

Able to work in harmony with the other team members.

(c) COMMUNICATE CLEARLY.

The tasks and responsibilities must be clearly communicated. The best way to do this is to commit them to writing in a job description. This will include the person's role, their title, to whom they are answerable, and what their specific responsibilities are.

(d) ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY.

The job description will describe each task for which the designated person will be responsible. They must be clearly informed about what the performance of their task entails and what is ultimately expected of them. Obviously all this will be communicated in conversation and discussion too and the Senior Pastor must ensure that his appointees thoroughly understand all that is required of them.

(e) CONFER ADEQUATE AUTHORITY.

Once the person has received appointment, their authority must be clearly acknowledged. It must be sufficient for them to adequately fulfil every aspect of their role.

(f) REQUIRE ACCOUNTABILITY.

Although the appointee has sufficient authority to proceed with their tasks, they must also be required to report regularly on their work. Some method must be devised to make it possible to provide a full report of progress and problems on a regular basis. This can be done to some degree in staff meetings, but they should also be given regular opportunities to be personally de-briefed by the person's supervisor.

(g) SUPERVISE AND EVALUATE.

The efficiency and effectiveness of the worker must be consistently supervised and evaluated. Changes and adjustments will usually be required from time to time to make the role more productive.

(h) COMMAND AND REWARD ACHIEVEMENT.

Every team member must be able to "share the spoils of victory", and enjoy some fruit of their labours. The team leader should always acknowledge and commend for a job well done. He must always give encouragement and positive exhortation.

WISE AND EFFECTIVE DELEGATION:

1. INCREASE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS.

You can multiply your effectiveness many times through wise delegation. By delegation to others of the time consuming tasks, you can concentrate on the things which specifically require your expertise.

2. BUILDS AN EFFECTIVE TEAM.

The majority of churches which are experiencing dramatic growth today are using team ministry. Once a congregation grows beyond a few hundred members it is almost impossible for one person to adequately care for it. A team, working in harmony, can accomplish so much more than an individual leader. There are many more skills available to cover a wide range of needs.

3. DEVELOPS NEW SKILLS IN OTHER PEOPLE.

Team ministry situations are the best environments for encouraging the development of ministry skills in other people. The structure of teams affords good opportunities for discipling and developing others.

4. ACCOMPLISHES GREATER TASKS.

A strong team can undertake and accomplish much larger tasks than any individual leader can. If you have a vision to accomplish some great task you should begin in the earliest stages to build a strong team of workers around you. It is never too soon to begin forming the basis of your team. Even the smallest church can begin to lay the foundations for a strength team.

5. DISCIPLES MORE BELIEVERS.

An integral aspect of world evangelism is the "making of disciples". (Matt. 28:19) The processes of discipleship can be most effectively applied within the structure of a church in which delegation of tasks and ministries is employed. The philosophy of delegation and team ministry encourages the use of more people in the work of the church. This encourages people to become involved in discipleship because there are more opportunities for them to utilise the skills which they develop.

EQUIPPING GOD'S ARMY.

God's Army requires rank and structures of authority, which can be much more readily developed in a situation which features authority structures.

BUILDING GOD'S KINGDOM.

The Kingdom rule of God is based on two principles:

God's Authority.

Our submission to that authority.

Chapter Eleven HARNESING THE WILL TO WIN

“Do you WILL to be made whole?” (John 5:6)

From the inception of our Christian life, the will is extremely important. Nothing of any worth is achieved without the exercise of the will and this is certainly true of leadership accomplishments. The soul is comprised of: the mind, the will, and the emotions, all of which are essential elements of an effective leader. The mind is basically passive, the emotions are active. The will is the balancing factor and is the catalyst that translates ideas and concepts into actions and achievements. The will is the factor which transforms dreams and visions into realities. It is the switch which turns on active faith, transforming it from passive anticipation to active participation. It is the bridge which takes us from passive hope, into achieve faith. Until the will is committed, we move into the realm of faith activities and we begin to actively possess those things which God has promised.

Jesus challenged the man at Bethesda, “Do you WILL to be well?” Not are you willing to be well, but do you WILL – have you made up your mind – are you determined to be well? The exercise of our will is the focusing of our faith, the concentration of our emotion, the expression of our commitment. It is the total concentration of our being expressed in appropriate action.

Notice how many times God says, “I will.” To live in creative harmony with Him we must learn to say: “I will” too. We can only live in harmony with God’s creative power and energy as we focus our will-power in line with God’s will.

OUR WILL, UNDER GOD, DETERMINES OUR DESTINY.

The will is our capacity to choose, to make right and appropriate choices.

It is the ability to initiate actions appropriate to our faith expression.

It releases the power and energy to sustain that action.

It flourishes under the challenge of pressure.

It sustains creative energy until accomplishment.

THE WILL IS NATURALLY WILLFUL.

In our pre-Christian state, the carnal will is in rebellion against God. Once we become believers it needs to be brought into harmony with our redeemed spirit. The will is like a stallion (wild horse) which needs to be broken in or brought under control. When the stallion is broken in, its spirit is not broken, it is brought under the control of discipline. It remains strong, but it is disciplined.

There are basically three kinds of people:

THE DEPENDENT type. Who are basically followers, typified by the sheep nature with a flock instinct, and usually displaying little initiative.

THE INDEPENDENT type. This is the goat type, in contrast to the sheep. They want to do their own thing and frequently dislike submitting to authority. This is a dangerous characteristic for Christian leaders.

THE DEPENDENT-INDEPENDENT. Whose will has been broken in and disciplined by God. All of God’s great leaders are in this category. They were usually persons with a naturally strong will and an independent nature, who were strong in initiative and will power. However, before they could effectively serve the purpose of God the natural will needed to be broken in and brought into harmony with God’s will – His nature and purpose.

The purposes of God are never achieved through self-will or self-effort, nor by strength of personality or charisma.

Moses is a clear example of this. As a result of some forty years as a prince in Egypt, Moses was tutored in all the arts and skills of management and rulership. He emerged from this early training as a self-confident and competent executive. In his own strength he sought to deliver an Israelite from oppression but only succeeded in killing an Egyptian and then having to flee for his life. God had to take him into the desert for forty years to undo all the self-confidence of Egypt and mould him into a person dependent on Him. This pattern of desert-type experiences happened to Jacob, David, Paul, and even Jesus Himself. In fact it happens to most if not all, who are leaders under God.

The wilderness experience is an essential aspect of the preparation of effective leaders, and you must not be surprised or discouraged when it happens to you. In these desert experiences God delivers us from egotism, self-centeredness and self-confidence. He moulds us into humility, submission, obedience, compassion, and maturity. He transforms us from being self-made persons, into God-made persons.

ACTIVATING THE WILL:

The will has enormous potential and talent energy. This is especially true when it is linked by faith to the power of God. But it needs to be activated. Here are some factors which will activate the will and release its latent energies:

Expose it to a challenge.

The will functions best when it is lined to faith and exposed to a challenge which demands faith actions. Jesus constantly exposed His disciples to such challenges. For example, He said, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already unto harvest." What a tremendous challenge this is! It is one which confronts many of us today. The world, with all its peoples, nations, religions, and philosophies, is a vast harvest field. It constitutes a harvest which can never be reaped by human efforts or concepts. It is a harvest which can never be gathered except in the power, authority and strength of God. Participation in such a project demands a commitment of our will and every aspect of our being.

b: Let your mind dwell on it.

Let this challenge occupy your thoughts. Think about it, analyse it, research it, interrogate it, investigate it from every angle. Let the enormity of it fill your imagination, let it wash over your total awareness. Try to absorb the scope of it until your mind begins to produce all kinds of exciting and stimulating possibilities related to this great challenge.

c: Let your emotions respond to it.

As you meditate on such a challenge you will begin to, "see it as God sees it." You will begin to think and feel about it as He does. Let the atmosphere of it excite your emotions and enthusiasm. Let it stir your compassion and stimulate your emotions. Before you can properly respond to such a challenge it has to move your whole being. It must be more than a process of thought. It must grip and excite your whole being.

d: Think and talk positively about it.

Before you can productively engage in a huge project such as this you must allow yourself to become positively persuaded about it. This can only happen if you first become wholly persuaded that you can be productively and effectively involved. You therefore need to prepare a positive approach to it. Look for all the positive angles. Let your thoughts dwell on them and begin to talk about them. There is nothing so persuasive as your own thoughts and vocal expressions. If you think you can do it, and you say you can do it, you are well on the way to actually doing it. You must believe and confess it and in doing so you will prepare the way for accomplishment.

e: Visualise success.

The mind has tremendous creative abilities one of which is the ability to visualise. This is really the ability to "see things by faith, as God sees them." It is best accomplished when you have a real sense of God's presence with you and you can allow your thoughts and imagination to visualise what is in God's heart and mind in respect of the project about which He is challenging you. It is really a thought transference from God's heart to yours. As the image of what God is wanting to accomplish through you develops within your spirit, you have something to believe for and to move towards.

f: Make absolutely sure that God is in it.

The process of visualising is a subjective one which needs to be monitored by objective criteria. One means of doing this is to share it with your co-workers and subject it to corporate evaluation. The Bible says that there is wisdom in the multitude of counselors. When a vision has the confirmation of a number of spiritually mature persons you may feel confident that God is truly in it.

g: Prayerfully determine appropriate action.

You need to “see” the ultimate, and plan the immediate. The same God who gives the vision will also inspire the appropriate strategies, plans, and activities for its accomplishment. God is a practical God and He will give practical steps for the fulfillment of the vision.

h: Begin to move forward in faith.

The work of God is always accomplished by people of faith. Every project of God is a faith venture. Joshua was told, “Every place the sole of your foot treads, I will give to you.” He had to march forward in faith. Every step was a step of faith, but everywhere he placed his feet in faith, God gave him.

Something which you must realise in this respect is that anything which does not have the possibility of failure in it is NOT a faith venture. There will be many times, as you work out the vision of God, that you will face the possibility of failure. Times when it will seem that some part of the vision is not going to happen. Occasions when God does not seem to come through in fulfillment of His Word. These are the times in which you continue to go forward in quiet faith in and dependence on God. You will have the thrill again and again of seeing God honour His Word and His promise.

HARNESSING THE POWER OF THE SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND.

An integral part of the will is the power of the sub-conscious mind. It has tremendous latent energy which must be harnessed and released in order to accomplish your fullest potential. The sub-conscious mind is like the hard disk in a computer. It holds all the programs you need to function effectively.

The human mind functions in three areas:

1. The Conscious Mind is uppermost.

In this realm lie all our immediate active thoughts. Everything we consciously think about day by day resides in this area.

The Sub-Conscious Mind is immediately beneath the conscious. This is deeper, beneath the surface area in which knowledge and information not immediately required is stored. Everything we have ever learned or acquired is stored here. We can delve into the archives of the sub-conscious to find most things we have ever learned. Although we are not immediately consciously aware of all these items they are all extremely influential.

The Unconscious Mind.

This is the area that governs all the automatic activities of our brain. I believe that the Bible has a lot to say about the sub-conscious mind. I feel sure that it was this to which the Bible refers in Prov. 23: 7, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” It is not the thought of the conscious mind, but that which he thinks in his heart.

Some facts about the Sub-conscious mind.

The Sub-conscious mind is:

Always functioning. Whether we are waking or sleeping.

Amazingly creative and innovative.

Has no personal volition but takes orders which it may modify and adjust but never rejects.

The Sub-conscious mind must be positively conditioned.

The obvious way to do this is to consistently feed on God’s Word, which brings your sub-conscious into harmony with God. His ways, and His purposes. Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word which is proceeding out of the mouth of God.” Imbibing God’s Word brings your mind into harmony with God’s thoughts. Through His Word living in you, God is able to think His thoughts through you. This promotes the healthiest kind of positive thinking which does not merely adopt a positive attitude in every situation but positively agrees with God and His Word in all things.

USING THE ENERGY OF YOUR SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND.

Your mind has two forms of creative energy:

PASSIVE. Ideas, thoughts, visions, plans, and strategies.

ACTIVE. Making those ideas and plans a reality.

USING THE PASSIVE ENERGY. Creative thought power.

Be constantly awake and alert to new ideas and concepts.

Inquire and investigate, explore and interrogate those ideas.

Excavate. Dig deep beneath the surface.

Concentrate, meditate and ruminate:- “Think on those things!”

Exercise patience. Wait on your ministry.

Remain optimistic.

Keep your motives clean and pure or guilt will unsaddle you.

Be co-operative. Huge ideas need co-operative fulfillment.

SOME ACTIVE ENERGY STIMULATORS.

Here are some factors which will powerfully stimulate and release energy for accomplishment.

a: A great idea, whose time has come.

Nothing could be more exciting or stimulating than to realise that you have received a prophetic concept, a wonderful idea whose time for fulfillment has come. A project which is timely and appropriate, with a prophetic promise for the future. A program which is welcomed and confirmed by many as appropriate and fitting to God’s timing and purpose.

b: An exciting new prospect.

The routine of life can become mundane and lack luster. A new concept will breathe fresh life and excitement into everything. God is frequently wanting to birth a new thing amongst us but we have to be willing to release the old in order to embrace the new. “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old, for behold I will do a new thing among you. Even now it will spring forth.” (Is. 43: 19). Too often we are afraid of change and the challenge it brings and consequently we remain tied to the obsolete when God wants us to experience a new and more effective thing.

c: Positive prospects – an exciting anticipation of the future.

Positive vibrations are always stimulating. They inject new excitement and enthusiasm into our whole being. When we are involved in something which has positive prospects for the future our total view of life is enhanced.

d: Faith – positive anticipation and conviction.

The life of faith is the native environment of the believer. We always function at our best when we are living by faith. Every true project of God is a faith venture and our involvement in it brings out the faith element in us. We thrive and blossom through involvement which draws out our faith nature.

e: Enthusiasm – emotional involvement and excitement.

God is an emotive being and He has made us in his image and likeness so we are also emotive and emotional beings. When we are functioning to our full capacity there is inevitably an emotional involvement and expression. Real enthusiasm cannot be experienced without accompanying emotional expression. Don’t be afraid of enthusiasm. Too many preachers and churches discourage enthusiasm and emotional expression as though it was wicked and sinful. The opposite is true. How can we be the people of God and not be enthusiastic about it? Such a thing is a definition of impossibility! The work of God and His Kingdom can use a lot more enthusiasm. Some believe that emotional expression is harmful to our Christian testimony. My conviction is that the Church would benefit enormously if more people were enthusiastically and emotionally involved.

HOW TO BE THE “REAL YOU.”

In order to exercise effective leadership you need to be relaxed and at ease otherwise the pressures of leadership will build up and may become unbearable. Some leaders try to pattern themselves on other “successful” leaders, and they place on themselves an intolerable burden. Trying to pattern yourself on someone else is like David trying to wear Saul’s armour. He quickly realised that it

was too big and cumbersome for him. If he were to fulfill God's purpose for him, he would have to be himself, and use what God had given to him personally.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE YOURSELF.

I remember as a young Christian, I had the idea that I needed to pattern myself on other Christians. I quickly realised that this was not going to work. As I took my concern to God, asking Him to help me to be like other Christians, I distinctly sensed Him saying, "I don't want you to be like anyone else, I want to set you free to be yourself in Jesus!"

God created and redeemed the essentially unique YOU. He wants you to be yourself in Jesus. He has called YOU to a role of leadership and in order to fulfil His specific purpose, you need to feel comfortable being yourself. You need to enjoy being yourself and to realise that, "It's O.K. to be YOU!" Don't be afraid to be different. God is a God of variety. Had he wanted everyone to be the same He would have created us that way. Since He has made us in a wide variety of forms that is the way He wants us to be. Always resist the temptation to compare yourself unfavourably with others. You need to develop a healthy confidence in yourself as God has created you and as He is forming you into His image and likeness.

Chapter Twelve - GIFT AND TALENT MINISTRIES

Let's take a brief look at two aspects of Christian leadership and management.

"God has appointed in the Church Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, **PLUS** Helps, and Administrators" 1 Cor. 12: 28. Another translation reads. "And in the Church, God has appointed first of all Apostles, second Prophets, third Teachers, **AND** those able to help others, those with gifts of administration."

The Bible clearly indicates two aspects of leadership, both of which are essential to effective functioning, growth and strength within the Church.

For the sake of simplicity I will designate these as:

GIFT MINISTRIES.

e.g. Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Pastors, Evangelists.

TALENT MINISTRIES.

e.g. Helps, and those with gifts of Administration.

These may be more easily recognisable under the terms:

LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT

The two streams are clearly seen in the origins of the Church.

APOSTOLIC LEADERS.

Proclaiming the Good News, gathering the crowds, calling forth commitments to Christ, baptising new believers, etc. Acts Chapter 2 and 3.

ADMINISTRATORS.

Organising the new believers into effectively functioning groups, (local churches). Setting up and administering ministries to feed the widows etc. Act 6: 1 – 7.

The two ministries are absolutely essential to the effectiveness of the Church. They are rarely found in the same person, e.g. Moses. Ex. 18: 13 – 27.

The following characteristics are frequently opposite. The obvious answer to the situation is the uniting of two ministries working in harmony (Team work, Delegation, Training)

LEADERS	ADMINISTRATORS
<p>Initiate. Take risks. See visions. Look through telescopes. Spearhead direction Pioneer. Reach for responsibility. Create opportunities. Use authority forcefully. Delegate enthusiastically. Set faith goals. Strive for advancement. Motivate people. Create.</p>	<p>Consolidate. Minimise risk factors. Set goals. Look through microscopes. Monitor progress. Consolidate. Accept responsibility. Accept opportunities. Use authority cautiously. Delegates cautiously. Set “reasonable” goals. Work for conservation. Manage projects. Maintain.</p>

EXCITING LEADERSHIP, PLUS GOOD MANAGEMENT = SUCCESS!!!

Do you know someone strong in characteristics which are weak in your own ministry?
How could you best combine with them to merge your strength?

CONSIDER THESE STATEMENTS:

- Leaders may become good managers.
- Managers rarely ever become dynamic leaders.
- Management skills can never replace leadership skills.
- The effectiveness of a leader is ultimately judged by the quality of his followers.

The two roles, viz. Leadership and Management, are greatly different and the type of persons suited to each are usually very different. Both are vital, even indispensable to the success of the leadership model and it is imperative that both roles recognise this.

The leader must recognise his need for adequate organisational and management processes. The administrator must recognise that his gift cannot function to its maximum effectively without the visionary, inspirational and motivational strengths of the leader.

Paul says that each member of the body must recognise and honour the other members. They must recognise their differences and the variety of their functions and esteem each other more highly than themselves. The effective and efficient functioning of the body depends on the presence of the various and different members and their ability (willingness?) to fit and function together without friction.

THE DIFFERENCE IN GIFTINGS. (1 Cor. 12: 14-31)

“The body is not one member but many.” Paul depicts them as feet, hands, ears and eyes. Leaders, (Visionaries) are usually very different persons to those person gifted, suited and qualified for administrative roles. Their very nature, temperament and personality are different. The leader is often a volatile, charismatic type of person, effervescent (being in high spirits) and expensive. The administrator is usually quite different, if not entirely opposite. Each must recognise their differences and the need for their variety of giftings. They are as different as the foot to the hand or the ear to the eye.

THE DIVERSITY OF THEIR FUNCTIONS.

As widely as their giftings vary, so do the functions of their giftings. How difficult it is for a person without hands to have their feet perform those tasks that would be normally done by hands and fingers.

THE COMPLEMENTARY NATURE OF THEIR FUNCTIONS.

The beauty of the body is that all the varied parts are made to complement each other. There is no place for jealousy nor for competition. God had gloriously designed each and every member to

perform its particular function and the ultimate result is a pleasing and effective harmony. The body, working through its various members can successfully accomplish a multitude of tasks that no one member could ever achieve.

Chapter Thirteen - OVERCOMING STRESS AND AVOIDING BURNOUT. (UNCOVERING THE SECRET SICKNESS)

An extremely serious medical condition has begun to plague Clergymen, Christian workers and Welfare workers generally in the past decade. This condition is affecting thousands of persons in those ranks, yet little seems to be known about it and few people appear willing to address its reality.

Since I first discovered this unwelcome intruder I have frequently dubbed it: “The Secret Sickness” – the problem which no one wants to acknowledge. I am referring to a condition commonly known as “burnout”, which is a non-technical term for complete nervous and emotional exhaustion.

My main purpose in writing this brief chapter is firstly to help uncover this secret sickness – to tear away the coverings and expose it for what it is. To sound a note of warning to thousands of ministers and welfare workers concerning a condition about which they possibly know little, but which may lurk around the next corner awaiting an opportunity to pounce on them.

I also want to bring this problem out into the open for the sake of those people who are presently suffering from the ravages of it and have been unable to find an understanding confidant. This, because so few people, including medical doctors and pastors, appear to have any real empathetic knowledge of this serious problem. I want to inform the general community, of the fearful reality of this plague and enlist their compassionate interest in order to provide some sources of realistic help for those in trouble.

Why is it a “secret sickness?” – because those unfortunate enough to experience it are often ashamed, embarrassed and unwilling to publicly admit their problem. They battle against it secretly and alone rather than acknowledge in some public way that they are experiencing such a problem. This is largely because it is too often perceived as some type of “spiritual failure.” A weakness which no Christian soldier should ever have. The kind of problem that may be indicative of some basic failure to live out their faith as it was meant to be followed. The kind of malady of which some Christians all too easily conclude, “if he had more faith and really believed God’s Word, this could never have happened to him.”

A further reason why it is a problem little spoken of and largely neglected is because relatively few people really understand much about it. Most people are now aware of something termed “burnout” and are vaguely familiar with what it infers. But few of them really have any informed understanding or specific idea of what it is. I personally believe that every minister and Christian worker needs to have a thorough understanding of the basics of this phenomena for two main reasons. The first reason is so that they personally can take all necessary precautions to avoid becoming victims. The second good reason is so that they can provide some sound assistance and meaningful help for fellow workers who are suffering from this problem.

I am writing this article from three perspectives. • Personal experience.

• Compassionate observation of others. •

Interested research into the problem.

I do need to emphasise that I am not writing this study from a medical perspective. I am not qualified to do that, having no formal qualifications in these areas. Rather I write as a pastor and shepherd. I write as a minister to fellow ministers, wanting to enlighten them for their own good and to enrich their ministry for the benefit of those people to whom they minister. I am also writing to the many who are experiencing and suffering from burnout. Particularly though not solely, to those engaged in caring ministries whose labours have occasioned their own personal suffering. I write as one who has experienced burnout personally and in consequence have become extremely

concerned for others, particularly for the victims of this phenomena. I would like to place some indicators along their path. Some warning signs which may help to steer them away from danger. Some positive messages which will convey hope. Some suggestions that will help to ease their journey and bring them to an experience of total healing.

Recent medical surveys indicate that up to 90% of all visits to family physicians today are for stress related disorders. Modern research has also established links between stress and many physical disorders. Many researchers believe the cardiac problem, high blood pressure, thyroid trouble, and even cancer may sometimes be induced stress. "Burnout", the most common of these stress induced disorders, is rapidly becoming known as the "plague of the nineteen-nineties." The most frequent victims of this modern plague are business executives and people in the "caring industry", i.e. nurses, doctors, welfare workers, clergy, pastors, and church workers. I know that there are many Christians and ministers who will protest that Christians should never suffer from such an affliction and that to do so means that they have been working in their down strength rather than in the strength of the Lord. I certainly understand the theory they are espousing but must add that the facts indicate that many true and sincere servants of God expend enormous amounts of physical, emotional, and mental energy, and unwittingly exhaust themselves. Many Christian workers are so sincerely and totally dedicated to their work and pour themselves into it such a degree that they expand all their vital energies. Such persons frequently spend so much of their time in serving their fellow man that they neglect their own needs for rest and recuperation. The Apostle Paul spoke of the danger of, "becoming weary in well doing, for in due season you will reap if you do not faint." Gal. 6: 9. Please notice that he was not speaking about becoming weary of doing good, but of becoming weary, tired, exhausted, as a direct result of being involved in well doing. They were in danger of becoming utterly weary and fainting through their many labours of well doing.

In seeking to describe the phenomena of burnout I have often used the analogy of a motor vehicle. The tank is empty, the tires are flat. Not only is the battery flat, but the chemical constituency which normally holds the charge is also completely depleted. It is no longer possible to simply re-charge the battery. It has now become necessary to replace the chemical which holds the charge.

"Burnout" is a widely used name for severe emotional, nervous, and physical exhaustion. It is a non-technical term which tends to cover a number of different but similar conditions. The most consistent symptom is an almost total exhaustion of the body, mind and spirit. A chronic tiredness that affects man's total being. A tiredness which can no longer be remedied by an early night, or a good nights' sleep. It has reached a stage where no amount of early nights will adequately overcome the tiredness. The person suffers a chronic lethargy. They lack the strength to undertake even the simplest task. Their creativity is totally exhausted, they can scarcely think straight. Their drive and application are non-existent. Even the thought of work leaves them exhausted and depleted.

The particular causes of burnout are numerous and the symptoms may differ somewhat from case to case. The diagnosis obviously needs to be more specific if any form of medical treatment is required. For the purpose of this brief study we will not try to deal with the various disorders but will consider them together under the general designation of "Burnout".

I have discovered that pastors are particularly vulnerable to this insidious disorder for three main reasons.

The very nature of their work in caring for people.

The heavy, self imposed work-load of conscientious ministers.

A false sense of security, assuming that it could never happen to them.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF BURNOUT

Although many Christians believe that a child of God should never suffer from such disorders as nervous exhaustion or burnout, I believe that there is considerable evidence in the Bible to confirm that some of God's finest servants experienced such trials. Church history also confirms that some of the greatest leaders have suffered from various forms of this affliction.

WAS MOSES ON THE VERGE OF BURNOUT?

Moses is probably a clear example of a man who was rapidly heading for a case of burnout when his wise father-in-law intervened and persuaded him to unload some of his responsibilities through the process of delegation. (Exodus 18: 13 – 27). Jethro observed several things about his son-in-law.

V.13. He was working long hours – from morning until evening. He had the heavy responsibility of judging the people's problems.

V.14. He carried this burden alone.

V.16. He was endeavouring to solve all the people's difficulties.

V.18. Moses was wearing himself out with a task which was too much for him.

V.18. The people were not being well served either.

Jethro counseled Moses to appoint suitable leaders and to delegate much of his responsibility to them. After this nothing more is said about Moses being worn out and we may presume that the new system saved him from total exhaustion.

ELIJAH EXPERIENCED BURNOUT (1 Kings 19: 1 – 8)

In 1 Kings 18 Elijah was involved in several intense spiritual dramas which left him depleted and exhausted, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

Vs. 20-40. He defied and defeated the 450 prophets of Baal.

Vs. 41-45. He prayed down rain to end the drought.

V.46. He outran a chariot for fifteen miles. Even though, "The hand of the Lord was upon him", he was still exhausted when he arrived at Jezreel. James tells us that "Elijah was a man of similar passions (emotions) as ourselves." (James 5: 18). The spiritual toll of recent events had left him weakened and spent. When Jezebel threatened him, he ran for his life. In chapter 19 we observe several classic symptoms of burnout.

A: Fleeing from pressure and responsibilities.

V.4. "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and sat down under a broom tree."

The desire to dis-engage from the world and its problems and to get away from everything, is a common symptom of stress and exhaustion. So is the tendency to sit down alone somewhere, frequently assuming a fetal position, and often descending into a pit of discouragement and despair. The sad thing is that you tend to flee from responsibilities yet still find yourself in a wilderness.

I have personally known of people in burnout who have refused to get out of bed, choosing to remain there for several weeks. They have refused to go to work or do to any kind of work. They have remained in their bed day and night, fearful of leaving the security they felt there. They will sometimes curl up in a fetal position as though endeavouring to return to the shelter and protection of their mother's womb. Trying to escape back to a time in their life when they had no responsibilities and no stress.

Getting away from people.

V.3. "He left his servant there."

Here we see the classic tendency to get away from people to seek isolation and aloneness. The victim frequently cannot even bear the presence of loved ones although they are endeavouring to understand and encourage him. He cannot even bear the presence of close and trusted friends, nor of those who are nearest and dearest to him. He is "people-out", and cannot cope with other people's company. He frequently finds that he cannot even enter a room where others are present. He cannot venture out into the street or any public place. He is afraid to enter a shop or an eating place, afraid to be in a closed proximity with other people.

Disheartened and demoralised.

V.3. "He ran for his life and went to Beer-Sheba."

The man who had defied the 450 prophets of Baal alone, now flees from the presence of one woman who threatened him. What had happened to him? He had exhausted his morale. His inner strength, fortitude and courage had deserted him. The man who had successfully challenged and defeated so many false prophets does not have the courage to stand up to one woman.

D: A total loss of self esteem.

V.4b. “Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!”

The Burnout victim often suffers a complete loss of self worth and inner confidence. His self-confidence and sense of self worth are at rock bottom. His self-perception becomes entirely negative. He no longer sees any virtue or worth in himself or his abilities. This negative estimation is so powerful that he no longer sees any point in living. He is convinced that his life will never be worth anything again and he begs God, “Lord, take my life.”

E: Experiencing deep, chronic depression.

His attitude, physical posture, words and expressions, all speak of a person who is deeply depressed. His outlook is totally negative. He has nothing positive to say whatsoever. He has no positive anticipating of the future. Nothing to look forward to. His mood is dark and somber without relief. Fearful, debilitating depression is probably the most common and most frightening symptom of burnout.

F: Deep despair and loss of hope.

Suddenly his life seems to be worthless. There is no longer any point in living. “It is enough”, he cries. I can’t face life any more. Despair means the complete loss or absence of hope. Elijah is dejected and despondent, as low in spirit as it is possible to be.

G: A pathetic death wish.

V.4. “And he prayed that he might die, and said, It is enough! Now Lord take my life.”

Many Christians will have a hard time understanding how this great prophet, a spiritual giant of immense stature, could wish to die. They have never experienced the depth of despair which this man experienced. They have never known the darkness of a depression which can make a person feel that even death would be preferable to the kind of existence they seem to be experiencing. The “Death Wish” occurs when the prospect of death appears to be more desirable than that of life. This may well be what David referred to in Psalm 23:4, when he spoke of the “Valley of the shadow of death.”

It is important to understand the seriousness of this kind of malady for at least two reasons.

So that you can avoid any possibility of becoming a victim of such a condition.

So that you can truly empathise with others who experience such darkness.

H: His ultimate restoration.

Thank God the story does not end with his death wish. God stepped in and brought about his deliverance and restoration. Please notice that God’s prescription included a long sleep and a good meal! Two very natural remedies. (1 Kings 19: 6.) It is still very often the case that natural remedies are the simplest and best.

WAS DAVID ANOTHER VICTIM?

“Why are you cast down O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?” (Ps. 42: 11)

Much of the powerful and dramatic imagery of David’s writing can only be understood if we recognise that he was probably experiencing severe emotional trauma, nervous exhaustion, and its resulting bouts of depression – classic symptoms of burnout. At the time of his sad episode with Bathsheba he was most probably suffering from mental and emotional exhaustion. (2 Sam. 11: 1 – 13.) It was “the time when kings go forth to battle”, yet David, a great warrior of renown, remained at home, probably suffering from battle fatigue. He was also in his middle years, and possibly undergoing a mid-life crisis. He was suffering from insomnia and disturbed sleep patterns, another symptom common to burnout. None of this is offered as an excuse for what happened but it does give some possible background to the sad incident and should serve as a warning to others.

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL.

The graphic imagery of Psalm 22 can be better understood if we recognise that it was a scene from David’s experience of burnout. Many of the verses only make sense when we read them with this background in mind. Otherwise they may appear to be exaggerated. Whilst this psalm is obviously prophetic of the suffering Messiah, we must also realise that it is initially a record of David’s

experience. As such he becomes a type of Messiah in the darkest hours of His sufferings. There are numerous dramatic, powerful, and fearful verses, but none so frightening as the opening lines, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the sound of my groaning?” (Ps. 22:1) It is a sobering thought to consider that this verse tells the experience of both David and Jesus. Both of them passed through a time of darkness, depression and despair so fearful that it seemed to them that God must have deserted them and withdrawn from the scene of their greatest suffering. So deep and so dark is the valley of mental and emotional exhaustion that the victim may no longer sense the presence of God with him.

Numerous men and women of God have also experienced similar traumas. Spiritual giants such as Augustine, Martin Luther, and many others have recorded their experiences of, “The Dark night of the Soul.” It is like a valley through which many have passed, emerging later into a new realm of light and maturity. Perhaps this was also the “Valley of the shadow of death,” to which David referred. (Ps. 23.) It was probably this experience also to which he referred when he said, “Weeping endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” (Ps. 30:5.) Certainly this Scripture and the concept it conveys, can be a tremendous encouragement to the person experiencing such a trial. The realization that such darkness will not last forever, but like the night, it will eventually give way to the dawning of a new and glorious day.

A NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE.

Someone will say, “This may all be true but it happened to people in the Old Testament. Had they known the advantage of New Covenant relationship they would not have had to experience such suffering.” Let us look for a moment at the experience of Epaphroditus in the New Testament. (Phil. 2: 25-30.)

HIS BACKGROUND.

He was an intimate friend of Paul – “My brother”, said Paul.

He was a fellow worker, - Paul’s “Companion in labour.”

A fellow soldier - experienced in spiritual warfare.

He was a missionary assistant to Paul.

A Christian leader of some stature, experience, and maturity.

THE NATURE OF HIS AFFLICTION.

He had over worked. – “For the work of the Lord.” V.30.

No other cause is mentioned.

He was sick, almost unto death. (v 27.) “Because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service to me.” (v.30.)

Actual physical work will make you tired but it will not usually bring you close to death. But the stress, concern, and anxiety of responsibility and of trying to do the work of several people can certainly do it. Epaphroditus was obviously trying to do the work of several persons who were “lacking in their service to Paul.”

HIS DELIVERANCE.

v.27. “But God had mercy upon him” – and upon Paul too.

Epaphroditus was able to become active again in the work of God. The Philippians rose to their responsibilities again and began to serve Paul as they ought to have done previously, sending their gifts through Epaphroditus. One of the good results of this tragedy was that many more people became involved in the ministry. This will often be a consequence.

SOME COMMON SYMPTOMS OF BURNOUT.

Burnout occurs when the mental and emotional faculties are completely exhausted so that the victim can no longer cope with life and its responsibilities.

What are some of the symptoms of burnout? How can you know when you are in danger of succumbing to it? I will mention briefly a range of possible symptoms which is by no means exhaustive. You may identify with some or all of them. If so, you need to examine your situation and take some evasive action. If you are in the early stages of this condition some kind of short break or holiday may rectify your problem. You may also need to re-organise your life and schedule somewhat, probably delegating some of your work load to an associate. Should the

symptoms be more advanced and more deeply entrenched, you will probably need to take more serious steps. If you do take a holiday, and find it impossible to relax, this could be a strong indication that you are heading for serious trouble and need to take some responsible steps. There are usually numerous warning signs which, if heeded early enough, can cause you to take some simple steps to defuse the problem. However, if ignored and allowed to take a stronger hold, the solution soon becomes less simple and the condition becomes far more difficult to cure.

One analogy I sometime use is as follows. Imagine that you are walking across an area of rough, unknown ground on a night which is extremely dark. You cannot see a hand in front of you but you are determined to keep going across the field. You walk slowly and carefully, endeavouring to sense any potential obstacles and avoid them. But despite your cautiousness you still stumble over branches and rocks which lie in your path and incur minor injuries. Instead of taking this as a warning and deciding to delay the journey until the light is better, you foolishly determine to continue on. Eventually you fall into a deep, dark pit from which there is no easy way of escape. Now you are going to need some help to climb back out of the hole and it is going to take some time. The time required may vary to some degree and the kind of pain and despair you experience may vary from one person's experience to another's. But the fact is that you will not be able to emerge easily. You will probably experience some of the darkest days you have ever known, and so will your loved ones.

If you have never witnessed or experienced this frightening phenomena you may feel that I am exaggerating its repercussions. As a result, you may choose to ignore my warning, but let me emphasise that this sickness is very real and quite frightening. It is certainly not a figment of the imagination. It is serious, devastating, and destructive. Thousands are presently experiencing its devastation and I am sure that each one of them has regretted that they did not recognise the symptoms earlier and do something effective to rescue themselves before it becomes a long term problem.

It is therefore important that we know something about the common symptoms so that we are able to recognise them early and take evasive action before the problem becomes too firmly entrenched. I shall merely comment briefly on each symptom.

The symptoms generally fall into three categories:

Emotional exhaustion, tiredness, weariness and depression.

Depersonalization. Low self esteem.

Loss of creativity, concentration and productivity.

Initial symptoms may include:

Mind and thoughts racing almost out of control.

Stomach churning.

Physical tension.

Rapid heart beat.

Feeling of panic, agitation and confusion.

The victim may also experience some or all of the following:

Heightened anxiety levels. Overly worried and concerned.

Constant tiredness – almost total exhaustion.

Apathy and indifference. Diminished sense of responsibility.

Sense of futility. Hopelessness and despair.

Loss of creativity and concentration. Poor productivity.

Fear. Inexplicably afraid of everything.

Irritability. With one's self and with others.

Strained relationships. Especially with spouse and family.

Depression. Melancholy, dispirited and sad.

Disturbed in sleep patterns. Insomnia.

Change in appetite and weight. Rapid loss or gain in weight.

Negativity. Completely negative outlook.

Loss of perspective. Mole hills appear to be mountains.

Desire to cry like a baby.

Indecisiveness. Unable to make even the smallest decision.
Social detachment. A desire to be alone.
Low self esteem. Loss of self confidence.
Hyper-tension. Filled with tension and stress.
Psychosomatic symptoms. E.g. "Heart attack pains."
Desire to stay in bed. Often in a fetal position.
Feelings of failure. Fear of ultimate failure of life's work.
Sense of rejection.
Inability to relax.
Inability to read the Bible. Nothing makes sense.
Losing the sense of God's presence. Unable to sense God.
Desire for death. Morbid desire to die. Suicidal tendencies.

SOME ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS RELATED TO LEADERS.

As I have closely studied this phenomena for the past several years I have noticed several bi-products of this condition which are particularly noticeable in the lives of Christian Leaders. They are a few of the associated problems to which over worked leaders are especially prone and which cause special concern for them. I will briefly mention seven of them.

MENTAL DETACHMENT FROM REALTY.

Initially this may appear in a very mild form, simply a vague feeling of unreality or a "this is not really happening, I am not really here"-feeling. There is frequently a dream like quality about your life, as though you are floating through life and your feet you are not really touching the ground of reality. If this feeling persists and grows worse it can become a kind of "out of the body" experience in which you may feel that you are not really present, but are looking on as though observing your life on a T.V. screen. You will probably have a feeling that you are an observer, rather than a participator in the events of your life.

A DIMINISHED SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY.

Largely as a result of the detachment from reality there is frequently a diminishing of the sense of personal responsibility. Your mind obviously realises that much of your current stress is a result of your many responsibilities, and evidently sees those responsibilities as some kind of enemy from which it decides to retreat and escape from them. It also builds a resentment towards those responsibilities because of the pain which they seem to have caused you. Sub-consciously you harbour a feeling of "I don't owe you anything" towards them. This in turn causes an inner rebellion against having to service your responsibilities and a desire to ignore or avoid their requirements.

This attitude usually distorts the priorities of the victim. While some part of their mind realises that there are important things to do and may be even feels guilty about not doing them, another part of it refuses to get involved in the fulfillment of those responsibilities. An analogy which partly illustrates this tendency is of a person sitting at a desk on which there stands a pile of urgent letters which require responses. But instead of dealing with those letters the person sits at the desk for hours playing with the paper clips or tidying up the contents of the desk drawers. Anything to avoid getting down to the task of tackling the issues which really demands attention.

This diminished sense of responsibility is also very dangerous because it may intrude into the area of moral responsibility. The Christian leader also has a responsibility to a model of moral uprightness. There is a constant pressure of requirement to be a model of virtue and integrity. One part of his mind recognises the validity of this requirement, but another part of his mind, which is under great pressure from his responsibilities, sees this requirement as simply another imposed responsibility and resents its demands. The victim therefore feels less inclination to fulfil this perceived responsibility. He thus becomes more vulnerable and more susceptible to the temptation to ignore his moral responsibilities.

AN OVER-ACTIVE CONSCIENCE.

It may seem strange to follow my comments on the diminished sense of responsibility with the mention of an over-active conscience, but such are the paradoxes contrived by a mind under grave pressure. The fact that the victim may not be facing up to and fulfilling responsibilities does not mean that his conscience has been deadened. Quite frequently the opposite is true and the victim is torn between a diminished sense of responsibility and a frantically over-active conscience. It is this unlike but fearful combination which causes much of his mental turmoil and depression. He frequently inherits a constant state of near panic as he finds himself violating the rules of his heightened and sometimes exaggerated conscience.

His years of Christian living and his leadership with a Christian community have given him a very powerful awareness of what he ought to be. But his presently fragmented mind, broken by the pressures of heavy responsibilities, longs to be free from the need to perform the responsibilities which his conscience dictates. He is the victim of a fearful dilemma. He is torn between two powerful forces, his conscience, and a mind which is desperate for relief from pressure.

A STRONG SENSE OF GUILT.

Guilt is something with which most Christians are very familiar. The nature of the Church's emphasis has been strongly biased towards making people aware of their guilt. The first emphasis of the Church's message is usually, "You are a guilty sinner!" This is obviously a necessary prelude to experiencing forgiveness, salvation, restoration and a relationship with God. But unfortunately the emphasis on guilt often outweighs the emphasis on imputed righteousness, and the unfortunate result is that many people inherit a deep inner sense of guilt. This is often sublimated by belief in forgiveness and cleansing, but all too often guilt lurks beneath the conscious surface of the mind waiting for an opportunity to surface to accuse and torment its victim.

The condition of mental and emotional exhaustion occasioned by burnout often gives that kind of opening and the victim becomes prey to a conscience which persists in crying "guilty". People who are depressed, (the most common symptom of burnout) usually experience constant battles with feelings of guilt.

There are basically two kinds of guilt, - the real and the imagined:

The real type of guilt is a result of some sin or mis-demeanour which has offended a holy God. The Holy Spirit brings a sense of guilt to the person as the first step towards repentance, forgiveness and cleansing. This is the tried and trusted formula, the only true remedy for sin and the feeling of guilt that sin has caused. This is a fairly simple and extremely effective formula. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John. 1:9.)

Imagined guilt is much more complex and therefore much more difficult to deal with. Most burnout victims are not dealing with true guilt. They have not transgressed or offended God and He is not trying to bring them under a sense of guilt. They are suffering from "feelings of guilt".

Most depressed Christians are overly sensitive about their perceived faults and failings. They tend to feel guilty about everything. They have an extremely negative perception of their life and they wrestle with powerful feelings of failure and consequent guilt.

Whereas real guilt can be dealt with quickly through confession, repentance and accepting God's forgiveness according to His promise, imagined guilt cannot be dealt with in the same way. The guilt is not real in the first place, it is the creation of a disturbed mind which harbours a perverse desire to punish its victim. So how can such feelings be alleviated? How can the victim be freed from the power of imagined guilt? By understanding that it IS imagined. That it is NOT real. That you have NOT sinned. That God is NOT determined to punish you.

You are sub-consciously punishing yourself. You are disappointed and depressed because of your sickness. You feel guilty for being unwell. Some weird thing in your mind wants to punish you for being so stupid as to allow yourself to become sick and unable to meet your obligations and responsibilities. You are the only one who can release you from this torment. God cannot forgive you because you are already forgiven. Now you **MUST FORGIVE YOURSELF** in order to be set free.

SPIRITUAL DARKNESS-THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW.

This is usually the most difficult thing for a Christian Leader in burnout to cope with. The fact when he most needs the sense of God's presence with him, he cannot sense or feel it. It is certainly not that God has deserted him or withdrawn from him, it is the fact that the victim's mental, emotional and spiritual faculties are so depleted that he sometimes cannot register the sense of God's presence with him. I realise that many of my readers will have some good theological reasons why this cannot happen. They will probably quote many Scriptures which will seem to indicate that this should not, and indeed cannot happen. I would probably agree with all those Scriptures and receive encouragement and consolation from them. Nevertheless I know that such a thing can happen. I know firstly from the Bible, from the experience of both king David and late of Jesus, as recorded in Psalm. 22:1, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning?" I also know from the recordings of some of God's greatest saints in Church history who mention such experiences which occurred at times in their lives. Finally, I know something about it from personal experience.

Not only is it difficult to sense God's presence with you at such a time, it is also very difficult to receive comfort and help from some of the previously most reliable and proven sources of spiritual strength. Burnout has the ability to make the Bible seem totally irrelevant to your situation and extremity. The Bible has not changed. What has happened is that your powers of perception have decreased and are depleted to the degree that nothing seems to make sense anymore. During such times you may find it difficult, if not impossible, to read or to concentrate on anything sufficiently to receive any help from it. There may be books which could be helpful to you but to try to concentrate sufficiently to extract anything from them, only plunges you into deeper despair. The thing which your system is trying to tell you is that you have done too much concentrating on various things and your mind needs some respite. What you probably need to do, instead of trying to force yourself to read the Bible, is to try to remember those encouraging Scriptures which you have known and memorised in years gone by. Bring them to remembrance and quietly think about them. I believe that this is what David may have done when he tells us in Ps. 77: 10, "And I said, this is my anguish: But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord."

You may also discover that it seems impossible to pray. Particularly the serious and often intense type of prayers which you are accustomed to making. Here again it is your powers of concentration which are depleted. I believe that the answer is not to allow yourself to feel guilty about not "praying", but to engage in casual and informal conversations with God. Simply talk with God as openly and informally as you would your dearest and most trusted friend. Don't try to make your communion with Him religious and spiritual. Use it as an opportunity to simply unburden your heart and to pour out your frustrations, bewilderment and fears. Don't try to impress God. Just allow your heart and mind to empty everything into His heart. Tell Him your worst fears. Confess your deepest secrets. There is no way that you can shock Him. He wants you to unburden yourself and to, "cast all your care on Him because He cares for you."

WHY SOME LEADERS FALL.

It is a sad reality that from time to time, and far more frequently than we would wish, we hear of Christian leaders who have "fallen from grace." Men and women who are leaders of Christian communities and organisations endeavouring to lead God's people and to demonstrate the Christian ideal, yet they themselves become victims of temptation and yield to its pressures. I am sure that all of us have thought about this deeply and wondered, "Why?"

Obviously there is more than one reason and it is impossible to give one general answer to this question. For some it is simply a case of indulging in undisciplined lust. The result of inadequate self-discipline in the face of various powerful temptations which often assail persons in positions of leadership.

However, I am also persuaded that many of the people who fall prey to such temptation are under grave pressure at the time and may well be suffering to some degree from spiritual, mental and emotional exhaustion. In making this comment I am not seeking to excuse or condone

misdemeanours and sins. Nor am I inferring that this is true in every case of mis-conduct. But I am trying to make the point that it is sometimes (perhaps frequently?) the background cause of such behaviour.

The Bible teaches that mortal man is innately depraved. The fallen nature of man is one of depravity. The most common meaning of depravity is: “moral corruptness and wickedness”. But another meaning of the word depravity is: “likely to break down at the weakest point”, and this succinctly describes the condition of the basic human nature. Each person is like a chain which contains at least one weak link. If enormous pressure and strain is applied to that chain eventually it is going to break and it will break at its weakest point. It is like this with human beings too. When sustained and excessive pressure is applied to a person they are likely to break down at their weakest point. That point may be their nerves, their mind, their body system, or their moral strength. In normal circumstances this person is reasonably strong in all these areas and maintains good health in all of them. But under extreme, consistent and unrelenting pressure, something breaks down. A safety valve blows.

The person will then seek some immediate relief from their pressurised situation – some kind of diversion which will give them a pleasant break from the reality of their pressured life. Something which will provide a temporary alleviation from the insistent pressure of their breakdown. The diversion may be in the form of a drinking spree – an attempt to drown their depressing thoughts and morbid introspection. It could take the form of a sudden interest in pornography or a liaison with prostitutes. Possibly the most common diversion is an extra-marital relationship which may eventuate for numerous reasons, the main one being the pressing need to find relief and some diversion from the unbearable build up of pressure.

This may be one of the reasons why so many prominent leaders fall into these kinds of problems. The higher their profile, the greater the pressure. The bigger their church, the more responsibility and work. Which is all the more reason why such leaders need to be constantly surrounded by the prayers of their associates, fellow workers and church members. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why Christian leaders are so much more vulnerable than the average church member. The extra responsibilities of his office place so much more pressure on him. So often the leader is perceived to be beyond, and immune to temptation, when in reality the very pressure of his responsibilities in the vanguard of leadership have depleted his resources of stamina and made him extremely vulnerable to any temptation which promises a relief from his almost unbearable pressures.

All too often the wounded warrior is perceived in retrospect to be a hypocrite. He preached one thing and practised another. It is often felt that he must have been a bad person all along but managed to cover his badness and deceive his associates. But it is frequently not the bad person, but the good one who is overcome. The one who is working too hard, under far more pressure than he has ever realised or acknowledged. The leader who has felt that he has no peer in whom to confide and has bottled up his tension, afraid to acknowledge it to others. Eventually it explodes.

It is essential that we recognise the very real possibility that many leaders who have fallen to temptation may well be wounded warriors who have fought a good fight for many years but eventually, when battle weary and wounded, have succumbed to the enemy’s fresh tactics. Unless the Church understands this they will always tend to take a solely legalistic view of his behaviour and feel that the solution is to discipline him and virtually cast him aside. While some measure of discipline may well be needed, the main and immediate requirement is for healing and restoration.

This is the clear admonition of the Scriptures through the apostle Paul. “Brothers, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.” (Gal. 6: 1-2.)

God recognises that when a brother commits a trespass, something needs to be done by his spiritual brothers. But that something is not a legalistic censoring and disciplining of the person but rather a spirit of gentleness which will seek to restore the brothers.

WHAT ARE THE MOST PREVALENT CAUSES OF BURNOUT?

Once again I shall only make brief comments and restrict myself to the causes which are most common to Christian workers:

- Stress and tension, indicating too much pressure.
- Overwork. Long hours. Insufficient holidays or breaks.
- Under-fulfilled expectations.
- Carrying other people's problems and worries.
- Heavy responsibilities of leadership.
- Too little relaxation.
- Post viral depression. (Have a medical examination).
- Negative emotions, disappointment, discouragement, etc.
- Lack of trusted and understanding associates to confide in.

HOW TO USE STRESS POSITIVELY.

Not all stress is negative and destructive. There is also a positive form of stress which heightens sensitivity and performance. This is the stress which athletes turn to their advantage. It is the stress of:

- Challenge.
- Excitement.
- Positive anticipation.
- Stimulation.
- Achievement.

Certain types of positive stress can bring out the best qualities in us. But they also drain our emotional resources and we need to allow ourselves time and opportunity to unwind from emotional highs. There is an element of positive stress involved in preaching and ministering to a congregation. Many preachers become emotionally involved in their work and attain a measure of emotional "high". They need to learn how to relax after such experiences and how to responsibly discharge the emotional tension they have achieved.

You also need to realise that ministering to people discharges a certain quantity of spiritual strength. When Jesus ministered to the woman with an issue of blood the writer says, "He perceived that virtue had flown out from Him." When we minister in prayer and faith to people who are drawing on our strength, we are giving out of our life and strength. This demands some rest and recuperation afterwards. Failure to recognise this and to take appropriate steps to reimburse our emotional resources can eventually lead to a serious exhaustion.

USE THESE STRESS ELIMINATORS.

There are numerous simple yet effective ways in which one can lessen the possible occurrence of burnout. I will list these below under five categories.

I. ADOPTING A HEALTHY MENTAL ATTITUDE.

The Bible clearly indicates that we can choose and determine our mental attitude. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 2: 5.) The Bible also teaches that our mind, and the attitudes we allow to dominate our minds, have an extremely powerful influence on our total health and well-being. If we choose our attitude correctly, we can control our life and destiny to a large degree.

The word "attitude" is most commonly associated with the human mind and emotions, indicating the way one thinks, acts, behaves, and responds to life. We sometimes say, "She has a wonderful attitude to life."

But the word also has some other applications, one of which is to describe the angle of a plane in flight, this is particularly important when the plane is preparing to land. It must make its final approach with the correct attitudes. It is also a nautical phrase, used to describe the "set the sails", on a sailing ship. One of the lessons we can learn from this is that the sailor can make his boat go in any direction he wishes, irrespective of which way the wind is blowing, providing he sets the

attitude of the sails correctly. The correct setting and positioning of the sails enable him to reach his desired destination despite the contrary winds that may blow.

In a similar manner we can help to determine our state of health by having the right attitude of mind towards life and its challenges. Here are some simple thoughts to help you to accomplish this:

A: Control what goes into your mind.

“Finally brothers, whatever things are **true**, whatever things are **noble**, whatever things are **just**, whatever things are **pure**, whatever things are **lovely**, whatever things are **of good report**, if there is any virtue, and if there is anything **praiseworthy**, - **meditate on these things**. And the things which you have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, **do**, and the God of peace will be with you. **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**” Phil. 4: 8-9.

All the things which Paul encourages us to think about and meditate upon, are positive, wholesome and constructive. As we train our mind to concentrate on such positive things we eliminate the tendency to dwell on those which are negative and highly stressful and destructive.

Let the attitude of Christ infiltrate your mind. (Phil. 2: 5.)

“Let this mind (attitude) be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” Christ is living in you by His Spirit, and His thoughts and feelings are in you. However, you also have your own natural thoughts and feelings so you must learn to sublimate your mind to His. Learn how to bring your own senses under the control of the mind of Christ within you. Learn how to think His thoughts and to see things from His perspective.

Assume a posture of meekness and humility.

“Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give your rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30.)

See yourself in a positive light.

No one is perfect but Christ. Everyone has some negative features as well as many positive ones. Do not major on the negatives. Major on your positive features. Make a list of all your positive attributes. Thank God for them. Rejoice in them. Accentuate them. Use them for the benefit of others and for the glory of God. God loves you and has a positive attitude towards you, and you should have a positive attitude towards yourself otherwise you are thinking contrary to what God thinks and you are in rebellion against Him.

See every crisis as an opportunity to trust God.

The Chinese word for “crisis” is composed of two characters. The first means danger, and the second signifies opportunity. When a big crisis overshadows our life it can be demoralizing and devastating. The more we reflect on it in a negative way, the more it eats into our peace and confidence. So we must determine to see it as an opportunity for God to reveal His salvation.

Keep a watch over your mouth.

Consciously, or sub-consciously, everyone talks to themselves. The conversations can be either negative and destructive, or positive and constructive. Whilst these conversations are in one’s mind they are thought patterns. These are quite powerful, beneficially or detrimentally, but once the words are formed in our mouths and spoken through our lips, they assume even greater power. So we need to consciously refrain from voicing negative thoughts and statements.

Psychologists frequently call this kind of conversation “self-talk”, and are virtually unanimous in their conclusions about the immense power and influence it can have upon your life. Its affect can be extremely powerful, either beneficially or detrimentally.

The Bible says that, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” (Prov. 18: 21.) “A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.” (Prov. 15: 4.) “The tongue of the wise promotes health.” (Prov. 12: 18.)

“Be anxious for nothing.” (Phil. 4: 6.)

Worry achieves nothing. The secret of avoiding worry is found in 1 Pet 5: 7. – “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” An old lady who was 105 years old once told me, “There are

two things about which one should never worry. The first is about the things which you can change, and the second is about the things which you cannot change.” Her philosophy of life was that it is pointless to worry over the things about which you can do something. Do something about them instead of worrying. And what is the point of worrying over those things about which you can do nothing? Your worrying will not change them anyway!

Try to practice moderation in everything.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men.” (Phil. 4: 5.)

Moderation is: restraint or the exercise of self-control. It is the avoidance of extremes. Excesses of any kind are always dangerous. They destroy the healthy balance of life and induce stress. We should always aim for temperance and moderation in everything. Don’t work to excess or eat to excess. Try to maintain a healthy balance in everything.

TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE.

One of the factors which frequently appears to induce stress and burnout is the feeling that things are out of control. This can arise from a number of sources which in themselves may seem insignificant, but when combined constitute an irritant that can erode your well-being and confidence.

Take control of your time.

The feeling that time is escaping from you and that you don’t have sufficient time to do all the things you need to do is a common problem. This can cause panic and despair unless you get on top of it. The obvious way to overcome this problem is to, “plan your work, and work your plan.” A simple program of time management will help you.

The simplest way to do this is to allocate your days. Determine ahead of time tasks you will aim to do on certain days. Then plan the individual days, dividing them into segments of one hour each and apportioning the day to the various jobs you need to accomplish.

You must also find some ways to restrict unexpected calls on your time. People who come to see you without an appointment. Phone calls which break into your work schedule. Some intrusions such as emergencies are unavoidable. Others can be controlled by good management.

GET YOURSELF ORGANISED.

Disorganisation is a major factor of stress. The feeling that everything is chaotic and out of control is frequently a cause of stress. This is particularly so when you are already suffering from stress and nervous exhaustion. You can get the feeling that you are about to drown beneath a sea of paper.

The antidote for this is keeping things as tidy and well organised as possible. Take a break every once in a while to tidy up your desk and your office. Designate a place for every item that you frequently seem to misplace. Try to get everything as orderly as possible so that you know where everything is.

Determine your priorities and concentrate on them.

Every person who has numerous responsibilities needs to determine an order of priority and have it clearly established in their mind. Otherwise it is easy to find yourself working hard at tasks which may actually have a low priority, and neglecting other things which are much more important.

Write out a list of all your responsibilities and things you need to accomplish. Just write them down in order initially. Then go through the list and establish the order of priority. Number each item from 1 to 15, or whatever. Once you have determined an order of importance and priority, allot sufficient time to each item on the list. Don’t forget to list such things as time for relaxation and time to spend with your family. Some time to spend on pursuits which will renew and refresh you. Keeping yourself in good health and a positive frame of mind should have a very high priority.

IV: MAKING TIME FOR RELAXATION.

There is a story in church history of a young preacher who once visited the Apostle John. The young visitor had heard so much about the esteemed apostle and fully expected the great man to be

in prayer, or studying the Scriptures, or involved in some other deeply spiritual activity. Instead of which John was playing with a parrot. The young man commented on this with some degree of surprise and a suggestion of criticism. The wise old apostle replied that, “The bow which is always bent, will soon lose its strength”, and recommended that the young man also should find some diversions and ways to relax from the tensions of life.

Try to keep your home as a place to relax.

Everyone, especially persons in public roles, needs a place to relax and be themselves. The obvious and ideal place for this is in your home. The obvious people with whom to do this is your family for they too deserve some relaxation from the demands and expectations which are put on people who carry a public office. The leader needs somewhere to unwind at the end of a demanding day. He needs people with whom he can relax, enjoy some casual conversation, and indulge in relaxation and laughter. If it is possible and within your budget, try to furnish your home with some items of furniture which help you to unwind.

Don't turn your home into an extension of your office or church.

Your home should be “A place apart.” A place to which you can retreat to enjoy some respite from the demands which a pastorate or other leadership responsibilities can place on you.

Resist the temptation to take work home with you at the end of the day. Don't let your home become like a place of public gathering. Don't encourage everyone to just drop at your home at any time. You need a break from your responsibilities. Your spouse and family need a break from being under public scrutiny too.

Schedule some relaxation into your routine.

“And Jesus said to His disciples, Come aside by yourselves, to a deserted place and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.” (Mark. 6: 31.) Someone said that, “If we don't come apart and rest a while, we will eventually come apart.” Jesus Himself frequently went off alone to some isolated place to pray and recuperate and He encouraged His disciples to do the same. If Jesus and His disciples needed to take time for relaxation, how much more do we need to do it?

Many Christians seem to have lost the ability to relax. They seem to feel guilty if they are not constantly doing something, and such people usually appoint themselves as watch men to ensure that everyone else feels guilty if they are not intensely involved in some spiritual activity.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE.

“For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things.” (1 Tim. 4: 8a.). Some Christians believe that this Scripture indicates that bodily exercise is not profitable when in fact it says that it is profitable, but only a little when compared to godly exercises which will profit us eternally. The reason it only profits “a little”, is because the physical body is only for time, but our spirit is eternal. Unfortunately many Christians seem to have the impression that physical exercise is not spiritual and they have the idea that because they are Christians their bodies are not subject to the same requirements as those of non-Christians.

It is an indisputable fact that regular exercise is necessary to the proper maintenance of health. It is also true that it is necessary to the well being of your emotional health. Healthy people, who exercise regularly, are far less likely to suffer the disorders which can be caused by stress. Brisk walking is the simplest and possibly the finest type of exercise. It does not require any special type of equipment and can easily be fitted into your regular lifestyle and commitments.

VI: CURING THIS DEVASTATING AFFLICTION.

If after reading this chapter you feel that you have diagnosed your own condition, what can you do?

Don't immediately persuade yourself that you have burnout if you have not. When people who are feeling somewhat depleted and discouraged read such a list of symptoms, they may tend to imagine that they have this affliction. You should realise that anyone involved in caring activities can become tired and discouraged to some degree but this does not mean that you have, or are coming into a case of burnout. If you are even mildly depressed there can be a tendency to be

negative and in this frame of mind to imagine that your symptoms indicate something more serious than is actually the case.

Confide in a trusted friend. Share your concern with someone close to you. Ask them to help you understand what is happening to you. Having access to a good friend to whom you can open your heart and be completely honest, and with whom you can share all your fears, is a tremendous blessing. Such times of sharing can be very cathartic, i.e. you get things out of your system through sharing them conversationally with someone else.

Talk to a fellow Christian leader to gain advice. (You should realise however that many leaders do not really understand the problem I have described. They will possibly not be able to help you nor even understand your problem. If this is so their response may be less than helpful to you.) The ideal situation is to be a part of a true ministry “team”, in which all the members are trusted friends as well as work associates. Don’t allow your team to function like a business executive board. Be true brothers, one to another, sharing your burdens and problems as well as your triumphs and victories. Have times of informal fellowship together where each is encouraged to share their heart. In this environment, “Pray one for another that you may be healed.”

Have some trusted minister to pray with and for you. Ask them to anoint you with oil according to James 5: 13 – 16. Follow the admonition of these verses, confessing your faults one to another and praying for each other that you may be healed. Talking to a trusted and reliable friend can be a real source of release. Don’t let this deteriorate into a religious ritual. Let it be a real and meaningful activity. This experience can be a healing one for everyone involved, for those praying and for those seeking prayer.

Try to have a break or a holiday. Get right away from your responsibilities for a while. If you cannot afford a real holiday, perhaps you can consider exchanging homes with a fellow minister nearby. Ideally one who lives near the ocean, a lake, or river-side. Or, if you live in a big city, try to exchange home with a pastor from a country side parish. This could provide a good inexpensive change for both families. If you manage to take a holiday but it does not help but rather aggravates the problem, then you must seek some informed and competent advice. The indications may be that the situation has now become too serious to solve through a mere change of scenery and restful activity.

Seek some competent medical advice, particularly if you have realised that your problem is much more serious than you first thought. If you consult a General Practitioner or doctor make sure that he is knowledgeable and experienced in such matters. Not all local doctors are. Ideally you should ensure that the doctor you consult is a Christian who is more fully aware of the implications of your faith and of the nature of the work in which you are involved.

TIME IS THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT.

My observation of this phenomena has convinced me that rest and the passing of time is the important ingredient of healing. Obviously a supernatural healing could occur instantaneously and this is a glorious possibility. But I know that this does not always happen so I want to give some help and encouragement to those who do not receive instantaneous healing. For them the passing of time is an inevitable factor and how to “survive” that period is important. I believe there may be two reasons why it takes time for the healing to happen.

Because the burnout has usually occurred over a prolonged period and such a thing is not going to disappear instantly.

Because when the healing process takes place over a time period the victim learns some lessons which will hopefully ensure that they do not fall prey to this affliction again. The healing experience is like finding your way out of a maze or out of a forest. Once you have discovered the way out you can do so again if necessary.

The critical factor is how to survive the intervening period and how to do so with the least possible pain and distress. It is with this thought in mind that I want to mention:-

A LIFE SAVING FORMULA.

Gleaning through many books on the subject, one has been a blessing to thousands. The author starts at the commencement of the book with a very basic yet powerful statement. An unemotional

statement, yet one which carries great powers of encouragement for the nervous sufferer. A declaration that seems to speak confidence right into the person's spirit. It says: "THE ADVICE GIVEN HERE WILL DEFINITELY CURE YOU, IF YOU FOLLOW IT."

One should understand that burnout does not happen over night, nor will it be cured instantly. It is something which has frequently built up through many years of overworking and being sub-consciously subjected to tension and stress. You will undoubtedly experience a period of dark despair when you may feel there is no hope for your recovery. You have heard of many others who have recovered and even emerged stronger than they were previously, but you cannot imagine how you will ever get better. You WILL recover. You WILL get better, but for a certain period you will not be able to enjoy the luxury of anticipating your recovery. Thus the formula will be the life belt which can keep you afloat until help arrives.

The four parts to the formula are:

FACE IT.

Don't try to run away, - you cannot outrun this thing. Once it has seized hold of you it is useless to try to run from it. There has probably been a period of time when you could have taken successful evasive action but this has now gone and you have to recognise that you have fallen victim to burnout.

ACCEPT IT.

Don't fight it. There is usually a temptation to ask, Why? Why has this happened? Why has it happened to ME? What have I done wrong that this should happen to me? How have I displeased God, that this should happen? An endless round of questions can commence to which there are no evident answers. In the negative state of mind which frequently exists there is often a tendency towards self condemnation. This does not help. In fact it usually makes matters much worse. There may be some things you need to recognise, acknowledge and deal with, but this is usually not the right time to do that. There is too much possibility of self recrimination which is not really justified.

Whatever the reasons and causes, it has happened, and it has happened to you. No amount of self searching or self-criticism is going to release you from your problem. However your release comes although it is going to take some time, and during that time you need to survive and maintain your mental and emotional equilibrium. You may well find that this formula will prove to be the best way to do it.

The two main subjects around which Christianity revolves are SIN and FORGIVENESS. The mission of Jesus was to purchase and offer forgiveness to every sinner who would genuinely repent. Forgiveness and salvation are the two major themes of the Gospel, but unfortunately the church has often majored on sin rather than salvation. Many preachers emphasise the sin and judgement aspect much more than the benefits of love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Consequently many Christians become sub-consciously sin and failure conscious. In the negative frame of mind which burnout induces it becomes easy to fall into a failure mentality and to drive yourself into self condemnation. You must determine not to fall into this trap. Let your thoughts major on the glorious, positive aspects of our faith. Major on God's love, mercy, and grace. Rest in the wonder of His finished work.

One of the common effects of burnout is a temporary inability to study the Bible or to engage in prayer. Don't allow this to bring you into a guilt trip. God understands your situation. You can fellowship with Him in an informal and simple manner. Talk to him from your heart. Unburden yourself at any time. Keep accepting His forgiveness and peace.

3: **FLOAT.** (Learning to do this is the real life saver.)

This is the secret of this powerful formula. Learn to float and it can make all the difference to your days and nights at this critical and painful period. "Floating" is an excellent analogy that you learn to do in a very similar manner to learning how to float on water. It is something you have to practice but once you master it you can then do it at anytime. Someone can explain to you the theory of how to float but inevitably it is up to you to do it. No one else can do it for you.

Just as you would float if you were carried out to sea, so you must learn to relax and float on the sea of nervous symptoms which seem to threaten to destroy you. Don't fight it or force yourself, as though endeavouring to swim against a powerful tide. On some of the famous beaches there is usually a very powerful surf running which can make it exciting for swimming but can also be very dangerous and cause many people to drown. One of the dangerous features are the "rips" which can develop. This happens when the huge waves of an incoming tide pound a depression into the beach. The depression fills with water until its weight exceeds that of the incoming tide and then it will form a rip and force its way out to sea. Should you ever get caught up in one of these it is useless to try to battle against it. The safest thing to do is to let the rip carry you out. Relax and float on it instead of fighting it. If you try to fight, it can exhaust and destroy you. But if you float it will carry you out for quite a way but then it will begin to come in again further down the beach, carrying you with it.

Float out of the depression which threatens to destroy you. Float out of the bed in which you have taken refuge. Float to some activity that will take your mind out of the depressing thought cycle which has gripped it. Float into the shop or restaurant which you have been too frightened to enter. Your symptoms, like the threatening waves of the ocean may seem to be about to destroy you. You may feel completely at their mercy but in fact if you will relax. You can float on top of those very waves that seem to threaten your existence. Float past tension and fear. Float past unwelcome suggestions. Float, don't fight."

LET TIME PASS.

It probably took a considerable time for your system to become depleted and it will take time for you to recover. So you must not count the days, weeks and months. You should close your mind to the passage of time except to remind yourself that YOU WILL GET WELL with God's help, but it will usually take some time!

You will probably be desperate to be well again. You will no doubt experience considerable guilt that time is passing and you are not accomplishing anything. You have been so accustomed to driving yourself that it will be agony for you to realise that time is rushing by and you are virtually side-lined. But none of this anxiety is going to help your recovery. One of the lessons you must learn from all this is the necessity to relax. If you do not learn this lesson now the chances are that you never will and it is absolutely imperative that you do. As surely as the sun will rise again tomorrow, you will recover and get well again. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." (Ps. 30: 5b.)

SOME PRACTICAL ISSUES WHICH WILL HELP YOUR RECOVERY.

When a person is caught in the throes of the burnout experience they need some very practical help. It is a time when so many cliches and glib answers prove their total inadequacy and only add to the person's frustration. The last thing they need to hear is someone saying, "Now just pull yourself together," or "You will just have to get on top of this thing." They desperately need some simple, practical, workable guidelines. Some principles which they can easily grasp despite the distraught state of their mind and emotions. Here are some of those kinds of suggestions.

Realise that it can happen to anyone, even the most unlikely person, the very one that you never imagined would be vulnerable to such stress.

It has not been sent as a judgement or punishment from God. It has not come upon you because you have sinned and inherited some dreadful punishment as a result. It is usually the inevitable consequence of over-work, too much responsibility, too many stress factors, too little rest and recreation.

If there has been some secret sin which has brought you into a deep sense of guilt and possibly been one of the stress factors, then this certainly must be repented of and put right because guilt is undoubtedly a powerful stress factor and must be eliminated.

It is not something of which to be ashamed or embarrassed any more than one might be ashamed of any other kind of sickness. This is a sickness which happens to be in the realm of the

nerves and emotions rather than in a more physical or bodily sense. Most sicknesses begin in this area anyway and are known as psychosomatic diseases. Problems which originate in the mind or emotions and then manifest their repercussions in the physical realm.

You will undoubtedly need a trusted friend, confidant and counselor, to walk through this trying time with you. This person may not be easy to find because relatively few people have any real understanding of this problem. Ideally this should be someone other than your spouse who is usually too emotionally involved to be objective and does not necessarily fully understand what is happening anyway. This is not criticism of your spouse. It is a statement of fact.

Your spouse, and family members may also need access to some competent counseling too. Living with a loved one who is suffering from burnout is not an easy thing to do. They are exposed to all kinds of emotional pressures and the very requirement of watching their loved one go through periods of deep depression can be extremely traumatic and wearing. Many marriages may not survive the imposition of this traumatic ordeal.

Always remember that the old saying is true. "An ounce of prevention is better than a ton of cure." Never presume that, "It could never happen to you." Beware of the possibility that it can happen to anyone who does not heed the warning and who persists in pushing themselves beyond the brink of their resources.

A close friend a mine, a successful Pastor who experienced and survived burnout and discovered that he was better and stronger person afterwards, shared four principles which he had learned from his experience. Let me pass them on to you:

Work WITH God, not FOR Him.

Love people dearly but don't try to carry all their problems.

Keep short accounts. Confess your faults and get forgiveness.

Develop the attitude of gratitude. Be thankful in all things.

Practise casting ALL your cares on to Jesus. You need to do this regularly. As soon as some burden or care comes up, before you are able to let it settle into your mind, cast the Lord. This is often easier said than done. Many preachers can teach about it but they do not necessarily practise it. It is not sufficient to know about this, or even to teach offers about it, YOU MUST DO IT.

When you have come to Jesus, and cast your care upon Him, then receive and enjoy His rest without any sense of guilt or condemnation. Many leaders feel guilty if they ever take a break from their work. They allow themselves to be driven by a need to be working all the time without proper respite. Remember that Jesus Himself frequently, "went apart and rested awhile", and He exhorts others, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened down, and I will give you rest. Learn from My example, for I am meek and humble, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt. 11: 28 – 30.)

Believe and confess that YOU WILL GET WELL. Do this even when your mind is screaming that you are never going to recover and that you will never feel normal again. When your emotions are so depressed that you fear they will never be elated again, that you will never sing joyfully or shout for joy again. Perhaps you never realised that millions of people have gone this way before you and they have recovered and enjoy good health again. Some people of your acquaintance, that you never suspected have suffered in this manner, have been fully restored and are experiencing and enjoying normal living once more.

However, your recovery WILL TAKE TIME, and allowing that time to pass without being agitated and impatient will be extremely difficult. You want to get well quickly for every possible reason but this kind of sickness rarely clears up speedily unless you have recognised it in the very early stages and taken positive and effective action. If you did not recognise it early enough and became a victim of a full blown episode of burnout, then it will definitely take time unless you receive a miraculous intervention.

Try to Praise God as often as possible every day. There will be many times when this will be the last thing that you feel like doing. When your mind tells you that you have nothing for which to praise Him and your emotional level is so low that you feel it impossible to rejoice in anything. Ignore every thought and feeling and praise God anyway. Speak out your praise forcefully, irrespective of how you think or feel. Go ahead and thank Him by faith for your healing and deliverance. This is what king David did during his traumatic experiences of deep depression and despair. Hear his words in Ps. 42: 11, "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God. For I shall yet praise Him Who is the help of my countenance and my God."

Establish a regular exercise routine. Part of the reason why some people experience burnout is because they are not fit. They have neglected the need to exercise their body and have become unfit. Once you are into burnout it will be more difficult than ever to stir yourself to do some regular exercise but you must strongly urge yourself to do so. You will have to do this gradually and patiently because your energy levels will be so low that the last thing you will feel like doing will be physical exercise. Walking is usually the best exercise to undertake. You may have to be content with very short walks to begin with and then try to increase the distance each day or each week. On the other hand some patients find that they can walk miles without great effort and find this is most relaxing break from the imprisonment often imposed by their burnout. Swimming is also an excellent form of exercise and very refreshing.

Make time for relaxation and fun. Many leaders feel that they just "do not have time to relax." So, if you don't have it, then you must make it. When you plan your schedule of work and responsibilities, write into it some periods when you will take time out for fun and relaxation. I recently heard of a preacher who had finally learned this lesson. He began to allot periods in his busy schedule when he would simply enjoy doing nothing. One day a friend asked him. "What are you doing on Friday?" to which the preacher replied. "I've planned to do nothing on Friday." "Oh good", said his friend, "then you can come and speak at the Seminar we are holding in our church." "Wait a minute" said the preacher, "you don't understand. I said I've planned to do nothing on Friday, and that is what I will be doing – NOTHING!"

You must learn to say a very small word which is difficult for most leaders to say. That word has only two letters - NO. Many leaders find it extremely difficult to do that. They feel they must do everything that is asked of them and particularly if it is "ministry". They feel that they are at everybody's beck and call at all times of the day or night. They feel obliged to respond to every call regardless from whom it comes. Such people must realise that the whole world does not depend on them. There are a few other people around too who can undertake some tasks. No matter how hard you work, you cannot save the whole world.

Prioritise your time with God. You will probably discover during your burnout experience, that it is very difficult to study the Bible or to get down to serious prayer. Don't feel to dismayed or guilty about this. To basic reason is that your powers of concentration are severely depleted and it difficult if not impossible to concentrate properly on anything. However, this does not mean that you cannot spend time with God. But you must make those time more informal. Instead of attempting do serious study of the Bible, simply browse through a few inspiring verses. You will probably find it easier to stay in the Psalms, especially the positive and inspiring ones. Realise too that informal conversation with God is also prayer. In fact, your prayers may become a whole lot more honest when you are going through deep problems. Many Bible characters discovered this. Some of the most profound and powerful prayers in the Bible were made in times of desperation. They were short and to the point and they gained a very positive result. You must realise that your devotional times are not to be periods of heavy theological study. They should be personal, intimate, informal times of true inter-action with God. You may well discover God in a dimension in which you have never known Him before.

Re-evaluate your goals and priorities. There are some extremely important lessons to be learned from an experience of burnout and the first and most important is that you must not rush

back into doing things the way you were doing them previously. You must acknowledge that your previous routine eventually brought you calamity and you must beware of going back to the same old grind and bringing the problem back again. You must evaluate your task. Examine your previous situation. See what God wants you to change and make sure that you do it. One of the foremost things is that you must determine is to work with God and not for Him. He wants to work in and through you. He does not want you salving away in your own strength, - “serving the Lord.” Some fairly drastic changes need to be made before you can return to your task again. Priorities must be seriously evaluated. You must learn to put first things first. You must discover from God the manner in which He wants you to serve Him. This may mean a whole new direction for you. You may discover yourself involved in a brand new field of ministry. You have to be willing to change. If God allowed this whole burnout scenario in order to get your undivided attention, He must have something very important to say to you. So when you are well enough to hear Him clearly, you need to pay serious attention to what He has to say to you. If you do not allow Him to change certain things in your routine you may find yourself going through the long painful experience again.

Realise that you can become a stronger and better person as a result of what you have been through. Burnout can be refining experience. It can be used to sift many things from your life which were possibly not healthy or good. It can change your attitude about many things, making you more understanding and considerate of others than you were previously. You should certainly be a wiser person than you were previously, understanding a lot more things about life and people than you ever really understood before.

Many persons have made this discovery and I have known numerous people who have lived to thank God for the experience of burnout because it has eventually made them a better person. Many have enjoyed life much more after their healing, having been freed from many inhibitions and tensions which previously imprisoned them.

You will undoubtedly be able to help many people whom you would not previously have understood. Most people are naturally rather impatient with others who suffer nervous exhaustion. This is because they have no way of knowing or understanding the nature or potential severity of such problems. Unless you are specifically trained in these areas, e.g. a Psychologist or Psychiatrist, there is probably no way that you can understand such matters except you have experienced them personally. Unless you have such understanding and empathy there is little chance that you would be able to help or encourage such people. The chances are that you would only hurt or frustrate them further through your inept approach and lack of understanding.

Once you are in a recovery mode, you will probably want to start helping others who are suffering from similar conditions. You will now feel a new and deeper empathy with them that will make you want to help them. However, you must not rush too quickly to try this. You must allow yourself adequate time to properly recover, otherwise you will be ministering out of empathy without necessarily having the personal strength which is needed. You may find yourself ministering to their need, out of your own need, and this will quickly deplete your own resources again.

You will live to bring glory to God and to His Name. God says: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me.” (Ps. 50: 15.) When you are in the midst of your trouble you are frequently so discouraged that you feel you will never accomplish anything again. You often feel that your usefulness and your service for God is over, that you will never again be able to bring glory to His Name. But God says the opposite to this in the verse above and you must pin your faith on what God says, and not on what you think or feel.

Chapter Fourteen THE LEADER’S REWARD

“When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” (1 Peter 5: 4). Read 1 Peter 5:1 –11. These verses are addressed specifically to Church Elders,

(Christian leaders) and introduce the intriguing subject of awards which will one day be conferred upon them. The awards are depicted as “crowns”, and from this some have formed a mental image of certain Christians, “strutting around heaven, wearing golden crowns.”

I am not sure just how accurate or inaccurate this image is, but I am convinced that the purpose of these awards is not to bestow some flamboyant image of a golden crown upon particular persons. The real purpose is much more practical and meaningful than this. The crowns are insignias of rank, which indicate the rank and authority of the wearer. They are not given in order to boost the ego of the wearer, nor to reward them by making them conscious and somewhat glamorous figures. The badges of rank are to enable them to function with authority in the manifest Kingdom of God. The “crowned princes”, will be part of the ruling community when the Kingdom of God is finally established and unveiled on earth. Messiah Jesus will be the King of all kings, and Lord of all lords and the saints of the Most High God will reign with Him in the earth. They type of crown will indicate the measure of authority that certain persons hold within the structure of this cosmic Kingdom.

A highly important aspect of our present leadership role and responsibilities is that God is preparing us to rule with His Messiah. Our leadership role at this present time is only a small aspect of the great eternal purpose for which God has ordained us, and for which He is now preparing us. God has called us to His everlasting Kingdom and to His everlasting glory. We are being prepared in this present earthly scene, for the great eternal purpose which God will consummate for the ages to come. His kingdom rule will be established and manifested throughout the earth and Messiah will reign forever and ever over those nations that will remain in the earth. “The kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God and His Messiah, and He shall reign forever and ever.” (Rev. 11: 15).

It is therefore important to remind ourselves that God’s Kingdom, and our role in it, is predicated on two things, God’s authority, and our obedience. These are the two main principles He is endeavouring to make functional and effective in our lives. Ultimately, the “success” of our leadership role will be measured by the degree that we have been obedient to God’s authority over our lives. Our rewards will not be received because of achievements such as how large a church we have pastored, or how many congregations we have planted, nor the positions of executive authority we have held in our denomination or organisation. The criteria by which our reward will be given will be the measure of our obedience and faithfulness as we sought to fulfill our response to His heavenly vision for our life.

God does not reward “success”, He rewards faithfulness!

We are all stewards of the gifts with which God has blessed us and He will ultimately reward us according to the degree of faithfulness we have exercised over our stewardship. “Let every man consider himself as a servant of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of a steward that he be found faithful.” (1 Cor. 4: 1-2). “His Lord said to him “Well done good and faithful servant, you were faithful over a few things, I will make you a ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” (Matt. 25: 21).

The passages we have under discussions is:

ADDRESSED TO THE ELDERS (LEADERS, PASTORS)

“I exhort the elders who are among you, of whom I am one.” The subjects dealt with in the following verses (1-11) are applicable particularly to leaders. They are instructed, counseled, admonished, and commended. They are also promised that one day, when the Chief Shepherd appears, He will reward their faithfulness to Him with a crown of glory, a reward reserved for faithful shepherds.

TO THE WITNESSES (PARTAKERS) OF CHRIST’S SUFFERINGS

It is true that the particular elders to whom Peter wrote were contemporaries of Jesus and literal eye witnesses of His sufferings and to some degree partakers of those sufferings. In our contemporary world there are no “eye witnesses of His sufferings”, but there are many who have been partakers of suffering because of their identification with Jesus. I personally believe that from these modern

and usually unknown and unsung heroes of our faith, will come many of the Kingdom rulers. Their very faithfulness to Christ and His Kingdom in the face of discrimination, imprisonment, torture, and even martyrdom, has qualified them to share the rule with their Lord and Messiah.

There is something about an identification with the suffering of Jesus that infuses a life with the quality of tested faithfulness which is an indispensable requisite of those who will be privileged to reign with King Jesus. This kind of fidelity is witnessed so frequently in believers and leaders of the Church in regions of our world where discrimination and persecution are the order of the day. Although the Church in the Western world enjoys a high profile I believe that a majority of those who will inherit rulership roles in the everlasting Kingdom will come from those nations in which the Church has been despised, belittled and persecuted. In the furnace of affliction, God has fashioned them for his Kingdom. Many Christians from impoverished parts of the world will inherit the greatest riches and rewards when the Chief Shepherd appears in His glory.

I feel sure that it was with this kind of understanding that Paul expressed his highest desire – to know Christ in His fullness. Such knowledge includes knowledge of Christ’s sufferings which can only be gained by some measure of participation in those sufferings. Phil. 3: 10, “That I might know Him, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable to His death.” 2 Tim. 2: 12 “If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.” It is faithful endurance of such suffering that produces the caliber of obedience required in those who would rule and reign with Christ. It was even said of Jesus that, “He learned obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Heb. 5: 8).

THE PASTORS MUST:

A: ACCEPT OVERSIGHT / RESPONSIBILITY WILLINGLY.

His acceptance of the leadership role must not be for any personal gain, whether monetary, emotional, esteem, or psychological. It must not be because of any kind of compulsion which persuades him against his true desire. He must will to be a servant of Christ, gladly accepting all the responsibilities and sacrifices involved in such a calling. He must recognise it as the highest calling that any mortal can receive and must enter into it with the highest and finest motives.

B: FEED THE FLOCK OF GOD.

One of the greatest responsibilities a leader can embrace is that of feeding the flock of God. This is such a high and holy calling that God has entrusted to us. It must be seen to be the highest privilege and greatest responsibility a man can accept. The education and edification of God’s people is so high on His agenda that He dare not entrust this role to any angel, but only to those who have known His redeeming grace and salvation, and have dedicated their lives to the welfare and health of the Body of Christ. Our motive should not be our desire to preach or teach, but our deeper desire to play a part in edifying, strengthening and blessing the people of God.

C: BE CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY.

Verse 6, “Humble yourself that He may exalt you at the right time.” Humility is essential in a godly leader because this indicates a genuine recognition that anything accomplished is due to the grace and help of God. If our labours and our work are the result of our own energy and ability then we have not truly accomplished a work for God. A true work of God can only be accomplished by Him and we are, at best, co-labourers together with Him.

D: LEAD THE FLOCK BY EXAMPLE.

The people of God deserve leaders who are truly examples and role models of the Kingdom of God. The Apostles were able to exhort the New Testament believers, “Be followers of us, as we also are followers of Christ”. Leaders who exhort the people to follow Christ and be like Him, yet are not themselves truly Christ-like, are hypocrites, and unworthy of their calling.

E: SUBMIT HUMBLY TO ONE ANOTHER.

There is protection and safety in genuine submission to other leaders. The humility which enables one to submit is a factor which attracts the grace of God, for God resists the proud, but gives

abundant grace to the humble. Humble submission precludes pride. It also accomplishes a positive work in us which fits us for the privilege of Kingdom responsibility.

RECEIVE A “CROWN OF GLORY.” (For faithful, obedient pastors)

Faithful pastors bring great honour and glory to their Lord. God is exalted and glorified through a faithful shepherd. Therefore he is a crown of glory to the Lord and this is precisely the reward he receives for his faithful labours. There are actually five crowns mentioned in Scripture, each of them a special reward for faithful service rendered to God. Let us look briefly at each.

THE FIVE CROWNS IN SCRIPTURE:

CROWN OF LIFE. (James 1: 12-18)

For enduring and overcoming temptations and testings: “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those that love Him.” There may be three factors involved in winning this crown:

Enduring and overcoming trials and temptations.

Loving Christ despite the many trials which come.

Remaining faithful even unto death. Rev. 2: 10.

INCORRUPTIBLE CROWN. (1 Cor. 9:24 – 27)

Striving for mastery and temperance or self-control in all things, for God’s glory. “And everyone who competes is temperate (self-controlled, balanced) in all thing. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible one.” See also 1 Cor. 10: 5 – 13.

CROWN OF REJOICING. (1 Thess. 2: 19- 20)

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even YOU in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His Coming? For YOU are our glory and joy.” This is the Soul Winner’s crown. The souls whom he has won to Christ, are his crown! When the soul winner enters into God’s eternal presence and finds many souls whom he has been privileged to bring to Christ, they will be to him his greatest joy and his “crown of rejoicing.”

CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. (2 Tim. 4:5 – 8)

“For I am now ready to depart, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but to all those that love His appearing.” Paul has reached the stage of life where he realises that his departure to be with Christ is now upon him. He reflects on the life he has lived since his dramatic conversion to Jesus and uses three analogies to describe it.

He has courageously fought a good fight.

He has faithfully run a marathon race.

He has conscientiously kept the faith.

The three analogies describe the various ways in which he has been faithful to the call of God upon his life, and the manner in which he has discharged his responsibility to that call. At the end of his life he can look back upon the years of faithful service that he has rendered to Christ and His church. He also anticipates with quiet confidence, the reward which will be given in recognition of his faithful service and which will indicate his rank and authority in the Kingdom of God.

CROWN OF GLORY. (1 Pet. 5: 2-4)

This is the shepherd’s crown. It is given in recognition of faithful service as a servant of Christ.

The various aspects of that service which are recognized are:

Being a true elder in the Body of Christ.

Having partaken in the sufferings of Christ.

Having faithfully shepherded the Flock of God.

Having willingly served as overseers of God’s people.

Not lording it over the flock, but leading by example.

Not using one's position for selfish gain.

There are obviously some features of shepherding the Flock which help to prepare one for service in the eternal Kingdom of God, just as king David's experience in the sheep folds. This helped to prepare him for his rule over Israel. (2 Sam. 7: 8) Some of those principles which enable one to be a successful servant of Christ also prepare one to be able to reign with Him when His Kingdom is established over the nations. (Rev. 11:15).

BELIEVERS WILL SHARE THE REWARD TOO

The crowns and awards we are briefly considering are not reserved solely for ministers or preachers, they will be conferred on many persons who have not been in those ranks but have faithfully served Christ in various other roles. I am certain that many "Christian business persons" will qualify for Kingdom recognition and awards and will play a vital role in the administration of the Kingdom rule of the Messiah. It is therefore essential that lay persons realise that everything they do should be "done as unto the Lord", because as they function in their business roles they are learning the various principles which will equip and prepare them for their roles in the manifest Kingdom of God. Matt. 10:40-42, "He that receives (recognizes, respects, treats) a prophet, shall receive (share in) the prophets reward." Whoever supports a pastor / leader, with prayer, loyalty, encouragement, cooperation will receive a like reward.

OVERCOME SATAN LEST HE OVERCOME YOU

The tragic reality is that it is possible for Satan, through various subtle devices, to actually rob some of God's servants of their award. How tragic for some who have faithfully served Him for many years and finally allow the enemy to rob and steal their inheritance from them. To avoid this dreadful possibility the Scriptures warn us to:

- Be sober, watchful, and vigilant at all times.
- Resist Satan by being steadfast in the faith.
- Stay humble and clothed with humility.
- Submit to one another in the Lord.
- Cast all your cares on Jesus.

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE

As we have considered the sobering fact of what Satan can achieve, should we allow him to do so, we should also remind ourselves that God is "The God of all Grace", and that His grace is abundantly sufficient to keep us in every situation. He is "the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments." – (Deut.

9). It is encouraging and reassuring to know that He has invested His covenant agreements with His mercy to cover our short comings and weaknesses. It stabilizes our faith to know that the fulfillment of His covenant is predicated on HIS faithfulness, and not ours.

GOD WILL PERFECT AND ESTABLISH YOU

We must always remember that "It is God who is working within us, both to will and to DO His good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13) Above and beyond all that we are able to accomplish in our lives, either personally or in our ministry, is the wonderful and matchless grace of the God of all Grace. Ultimately our success in life and leadership, will not depend on our capabilities, nor our faith, or lack of faith, but upon God's faithfulness.

Those leaders who are ultimately most successful from God's perspective, are not the brilliant, charismatic, high achievers, but the ones who are fully surrendered to God so that He is able to perform His work through them. In the process of accomplishing this He will:

PERFECT YOU. Perfection, from God's perspective, inevitably involves wholeness and maturity. God will "put all your pieces together", whilst He is also making your leadership role effective and fruitful. Its inference, in this context is, that He will fit you out completely, or make you what you ought to be!

ESTABLISH YOU. Establish you as a tree is established when its roots have sunk deep into the earth.

STRENGTHEN YOU. Strengthened through the infusion of His divine strength.

SETTLE YOU. He will place you on a firm and unshakable foundation.

Dear friends, God has called you to serve Him, but He has not left you to fulfil that call out of your own strength or ability. As with Job, “He will perform the task that He has appointed unto you.” (Job. 23: 14) As He works through you to fulfil that task. He will also be working within you to perfect His deposit in your life, and to prepare you for your role in His eternal Kingdom. Let us pray for each other as God works on this. Let us support each other in faith and prayer so that He will complete the good work which He has begun in you and me, to His eternal praise, honour, and glory.

THE HEART QUALIFICATIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Besides the nature of leadership, the call to leadership and the critical importance of leadership in the Body of Christ, the issue of qualification for leadership needs further study.

Will you qualify? Will you be ready for one of the greatest adventures of a lifetime? To a large degree, it's up to you. While God is committed to help you grow in faith, your level of corporation is the releasing factor that leads to a qualified heart. He is looking for people He can trust, people who share His own heart's love and concern for the Church.

This study deals with the heart qualifications of leadership that all Christians must have: the heart of a father and the heart of a servant. If you are called to a governmental ministry, they are your prerequisites and the foundation for the performance of your ministry. In a congregational ministry, they are the "modus operandi," the very soul of your service. They are qualities of the heart that we all rely upon to achieve our full stature as Christians.

Definition of the Word "Heart"

What does God mean when He asks His ministers to give Him their hearts? To the Western mind, "heart" may generally mean (beyond the vital physical organ): the emotional feelings of a person. For example, when those in the western hemisphere say that a man loves a woman "with all of his heart," we generally mean with intense feelings.

Hebrew Meanings. To the ancient Hebrew mind, however, the meaning of "heart" encompassed not only a person's emotions, but also his spiritual, mental and physical life. The Hebrews viewed man as a total until and the "heart" was understood in that context. The Hebrew word for heart is "labab," which in a general sense means: the midst, the innermost, or the hidden parts of anything. The Bible uses such phrases as "the heart of the sea" (Exodus 15: 8), "the heart of heaven" (Deuteronomy 4: 11), "the heart of a tree" (II Samuel 18: 14), and "the heart of the earth" (Matthew 40). In the Hebrew, therefore, the word "heart" comes to mean, by extension, the seat of man's collective energies and the focus of his personal life. The heart would be the very throne upon which life itself sits. In relating this to the ministry, when the Lord asks a man for his heart, he wants that person to be involved in the Lord's work from the very core of his being.

Greek Meanings. In the English Bible, one of the most common Greek words that is translated as "heart" is the word "kardia." In general meaning, "kardia" refers to the center and seat of both spiritual and physical life. It carries the connotation of both soul and mind. "Kardia" was often used to refer to the mind as the fountain and seat of human thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes and endeavours. Some Greek scholars believe that this Greek word (used 250 times in the New Testament) refers to the personality and the inner life and character of an individual. From these studies, we can reach a general definition for the word "heart" as: the core of a person's body, mind, emotions, personality, character and spirit. When the Lord tells His leaders to give Him their hearts, then, He is asking of them their lives.

Importance of the Heart

Physically speaking, the heart is the most important bodily organ. Without it, the body's various organs, processes and functions would cease, and life would end. We can draw many parallels between the physical heart and the spiritual heart, showing its utmost importance in the leader's spiritual life and functions.

Parallel:

The Physical Heart

The physical heart is located approximately in the center of a man's breast.

The Spiritual Heart

The spiritual heart (or the heart of the Spirit) should be located in the very center of a leader's thoughts, words actions and ministry, motivating everything in his life.

Every physical heart is approximately the size of its owner's clenched fist.

The blood in a physical heart is composed of different nutrient contained in the food consumed by its owner.

The pumping system of a physical heart is based on a reception/release method. Blood is received through another part of the heart.

The physical heart pumps blood from one end of the body to the body to the other, if it is functioning properly.

The physical heart pumps blood throughout the body, cleansing the body from its impurities.

The healthy physical heart beats automatically, without the conscious effort of its owners.

The physical heart is more prone to some forms of heart disease and attack on a high-fat diet, in an overweight body.

The physical heart is more prone to disease and attack in a body that consumes alcoholic beverages.

The physical heart is more prone to disease and attack in a body that gets little exercise.

The physical heart will be more prone to disease and attack the more tension and stress its owner experiences.

The physical heart is more prone to disease and attack the more heart defects its owner inherited from its parent at birth.

All of these physical parallels clearly demonstrate the importance of the spiritual heart in the life of God's leadership.

Guarding the Heart

Biblically speaking, a leader has at least three reasons to guard his heart. The first reason is that his heart is the very source of all his attitudes and actions. We see this in the following verses: Proverbs 4: 23.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life.” (King James Version).

Every leaders' spiritual heart is only really as big as the works of his hands show it to be.

The life in a leader's spiritual heart is composed of what he consumes through his mind and experience. The purest life is obtained from “eating” the Word of God.

The outflowing of spiritual life from a leader is based his own personal reception of God's love and forgiveness, and then its subsequent release to those around him.

The spiritual heart of a leader circulates life of the Holy Spirit throughout the Body of Christ, if he is functioning properly.

The spiritual heart of a leader knows and preaches the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ, continually purifying the spiritual Body of Christ.

The healthy spiritual heart of a leader shows the love, joy and peace of God naturally, spontaneously, and Without any conscious effort or insincere "put-on".

The spiritual heart of a leader is more prone to spiritual sickness as the leader takes in rich truths of the Word of God without practicing them and making them an active part of his life and the lives of others.

The spiritual heart of a leader is more prone to spiritual sickness as he dabbles with the wine of the pleasures and cares of this world.

The spiritual heart of a leader is more prone to spiritual sickness the less he actually performs the will of God as expressed in God's Word.

The spiritual heart of a leader is more prone to spiritual sickness as he lives high- stress lifestyle by not entrusting all cares into the Lord's hands.

The spiritual heart of a leader is more prone to spiritual sickness the more spiritual problems he has for which he did not truly repent as the time of spiritual rebirth by the Spirit.

“Keep your heart with all vigilance (and above all that you guard it) for out of it flow the springs of life.” (Amplified Bible).

“Guard your heart more than any treasure, for it is the source of all life.” (New English Bible).

“Above all else, guard your affections for they influence everything else in your life.” (Living Bible).

Philippians 4:7.

“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (King James Version).

“The peace of God which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds.” (Amplified Bible)

In these passages, the leader is exhorted to guard his heart as a soldier guards the city gate. The leader must watch over his affections, to prevent an invasion of foreign values. He must maintain the alertness and discipline of a sentinel who guards over a camp or castle to protect his king within.

The second reason a leader must guard his heart is because it is the source of all that he ministers or speaks. We see this in Mathew 12:34b- 35.

“Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” (King James Version).

“Out of the fullness, the overflow, the superabundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. The good man from his inner treasure flings forth good things, and the evil man out of his inner evil storehouse flings forth evil things.” (Amplified Bible).

Each leader is the guard in charge of the storehouse of his own heart, which is full of either good or bad treasures. It is out of this storehouse that the leader brings forth good or evil to the open treasure boxes of the people of the Lord. The Old Testament provides some beautiful illustrations of this. In the history of Israel, many storehouse of grain, wine, oil or weapons were designated for the benefit and protection of the people. Both Solomon and Hezekiah were very proud for the wealth in their storehouse. (I King 9:19; II Chronicles 32: 28). In the same way, every leader must ask himself if he is proud of the contents of the storehouses of his heart. From them, he must feed and protect the people of the Lord. Solomon stored grain, wine, oil and weapons for the defense of Israel. Today, the spiritual leader must store in his heart the Word of God, the joy of the Lord, the anointing of the Spirit and the full armor of God (Ephesians 6: 13-17).

The third reason a leader must guard his heart is to prevent it from causing spiritual defilement to himself or God’s people. You can see this in the words of Jesus. “And when He had called all the people unto Him, He said unto them, ‘Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: there is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any have ears to hear, let him hear.’ And when He was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked Him concerning the parable. And He said unto them, ‘Are you so without understanding also? Do you not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without enters into the man it cannot defile him: because it enters not into his heart, but into his belly and goes out into the draught, purging all means? And He said, ‘That which comes out of a man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

(Mark 7:14 – 23). The Lord Jesus Christ said that the unguarded heart of a leader can become the source for a long list of terrible things: base and wicked thoughts, sexual immorality, murders, stealing, covetous desires, dangerous and destructive wickedness, unrestrained and indecent conduct, an eye that looks for evil, an abusive mouth that slanders and makes malicious misrepresentations, a heart that is uplifted in pride against God and man, and a reckless love of folly.

It is the tragedy of the Church that at some periods in its history, this list of shame has become the agenda for some of its most influential leaders. What went wrong? Both the leaders and those who followed them left their hearts unguarded. Instead of shepherding God’s flock, these leaders were foremost among those who “like sheep have wandered away.” Grazing from one pleasure to another, they have lost all track of God’s will for the Church.

Qualities of the Heart

Thus we see that the qualities of a leader's heart are very important to God. God is continually trying (Deuteronomy 8:2), searching (Jeremiah 17:10) and pondering (Proverbs 21:2) the hearts of His leaders. It is leader's responsibility to maintain a pure heart before the Lord. (James 4:8).

What's the condition of your heart? In large part, that will be determined by your reaction to the Lord, to people and events around you. When you see a big need in someone's life, do you have a willing heart to help? Or do you have a hardened heart that says, "This just can't be fixed? When the Lord confronts you with your own sin, do you have a tender heart? Or do you have a hypocritical heart that says, "Please, Lord, not now. I 'm in the middle of something important now. Could we just straighten it out later?" When you hear an inspiring Scriptural truth in a good sermon, do you have a retaining heart that makes plans to implement the truth later in the week? Or do you have a double heart, that enjoys the thrill of discovering a new idea, but fails to follow through with action?

The chart of "Spiritual Heart Qualities" given below contains a list of heart qualities, with Bible verses describing both the positive and negative sides to each quality. This is an excellent tool for evaluating the condition of your own heart. Through the Spirit and the Word, God can use it to help you pinpoint and adjust any unhealthy conditions in your spirit. If you are or desire to be a Church leader, it should be part of your "spiritual curriculum." Moreover, anyone will profit by a reading and praying through the list. The list of positive qualities is a distilled inspirational message from God's Word.

Spiritual Heart Qualities

Positive

Grieved Heart.....Genesis 6:6
Willing Heart..... Exodus 25:2
Stirred Heart.....Exodus 35: 21
Wise Heart.....Exodus 35:35
Another Heart.....I Samuel 10:9
Perfect Heart.....I Chronicles 12:38
Tender Heart.....II Chronicles 34:27
Sorrowful HeartNehemiah 2:2-12
Faithful Heart.....Nehemiah 9:8
Soft HeartJob 23:16
Upright Heart.....Job 33:13
Communing Heart.....Psalm 44:4
Heart of Wax.....Psalm 22:14
Pure Heart.....Psalm 24:4
Broken HeartPsalm 34:18
Panting Heart.....Psalm 38:10
Failing Heart.....Psalm 40:12
Proclaiming HeartPsalm 45:1
Fixed Heart.....Psalm 57:7
Living Heart....Psalm 69:32
Established Heart.... Psalm 112:8
Understanding Heart....Proverbs 2:2
Retaining Heart.....Proverbs 4:4,21
Sound Heart....Proverbs 14:30
Merry Heart....Proverbs 17:22
New Heart.....Ezekiel 18:31/36:26
Fleshly Heart....Ezekiel 11:19
Purposeful Heart.... Daniel 1:8

Negative

Evil HeartGenesis 6:5
Hardend Heart..... Exodus 4:21
Deceived Heart...Deuteronomy 11:16
Non-perceiving Heart...Deuteronomy 29:4
Proud Heart....Chronicles 32:35
Presumptuous Heart...Esther 7:5
Hypocritical Heart....Job 36:13
Lifted -up Heart.....Deuteronomy 8:14
Firm, Hard Heart....Job 41:24
Iniquitous Heart....Psalm 41:6
Wicked Heart.....Psalm 58:2
Erring Heart.....Psalm 95:10
Proud Heart Psalm 101:5
Fat and Greasy Heart....Psalm 119:70
Desolate Heart....Psalm 143:4
Despising Heart...Proverbs 5:12
Deceitful heart....Proverbs 12:20
Bitter Heart....Proverbs 14:10
Back-slidden Heart...Proverbs 14:14
Foolish Heart....Proverbs 15:7
Human Heart....Proverbs 15:11
Abominable Heart....Proverbs 26:25
Double Heart...James 1:8
Wounded Heart....Psalm 109:22
Evil Heart....Matthew 15:19
Rebellious Heart....Jeremiah 5:23
Arrogant Heart...Isaiah 9:9
Deceitful Heart....Jeremiah 17:9

Pondering Heart... Luke 2:19	Whorish Heart... Ezekiel 6:9
Forgiving Heart... Matthew 18:35	Stony Heart... Ezekiel 11:19
Unblameable Heart... 1 Thessalonians 3:13	Weak Heart... Ezekiel 16:30
Blood-sprinkled Heart... Hebrews 10:22	Despiteful Heart... Ezekiel 25:15
Nourished Heart... James 5:5	Bitter Heart... Ezekiel 27:31
Sanctified Heart... 1 Peter 1:22	Beastly Heart... Daniel 4:16
Assured Heart... 1 John 3:19	Divided Heart... Hosea 10:2
Honest, Good Heart... Luke 8:15	Gross Heart... Matthew 13:15
Burning Heart... Luke 24:25-32	Heavy Heart... Proverbs 31:6
Single Heart... Acts 2:46	Reasoning Heart... Mark 2:6-8
One Heart... Acts 4:32	Envious, Striving Heart... James 3:14
Opened Heart... Acts 16:14	Lustful Heart... Psalm 81:12
Obedient Heart... Romans 6:17	Troubled Heart... John 14:1
Circumcised Heart... Romans 2:29	Uncircumcised Heart... Acts 7:51
Believing Heart... Romans 10:9-10	Darkened Heart... Romans 1:21
Steadfast Heart... 1 Corinthians 7:37	Hard, Impenitent Heart... Romans 2:5
Enlarged Heart... 1 Corinthians 6:11	Anguished Heart... 1 Corinthians 2:4
Caring Heart... 1 Corinthians 8:16	Blind Heart... Ephesians 4:18
Singing Heart... Ephesians 5:19	Unknowing Heart... Hebrews 3:10
Established Heart... Hebrews 13:9	Evil Heart... Hebrews 3:12
	Condemning Heart... 1 John 3:20
	Overwhelmed Heart... Psalm 61:2
	Evilly-exercised Heart... II Peter 2:14

The Leader and the Heart of a Father

Greek Meanings. “For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have you not many fathers.” (1 Corinthians 4:15). In the original Greek language, the word for instructor meant: “A boy leader, tutor, guide, guardian or servant whose office it was to take the children to school.” Among the Greeks and the Romans, an instructor could also be a trustworthy servant or steward who was charged with supervising the lives and morals of boys in the higher classes of society. The boys were not allowed to step out of the house without their instructor until they reached the age of manhood. The word carried with it the idea of severity; an instructor was a stern censor and enforcer of proper morals for the young men.

The verse in Scripture uses the word “instructor” to present a strong contrast. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians that they had many tutors or instructors (those who freely offered them strict teaching and rigid rules) but not many fathers. The word instructor denotes student-teacher relationship of instruction, whereas the word father denotes a father-son relationship of love. The Book of Proverbs was built on this concept of the father-son relationship. The father’s wisdom, knowledge and understanding of life are transmitted to the son in a loving father-son relationship.

Hebrew Meanings. The voice in much of Proverbs is that of the father speaking to his son. It illustrates the attitudes of a father’s heart:

- “My son, hear the instruction of your father” (1:8).
- “My son, if sinners entice you, consent not” (1:10).
- “My son, walk not thou in the way with them” (1:15).
- “My son, if you will receive my words” (2:1).
- “My son, forget not my law” (3:1)
- “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord” (3:11).
- “My son, let them not depart from your eyes, keep sound wisdom” (3:21).
- “My son, attend to my words, incline your ears to my sayings” (4:20).
- “My son, keep your father’s commandment” (6:20).

The Church Today

As in Paul’s day, so it is true in our day, that the Church has ten thousand instructors, but not nearly as many fathers. The Church has many scholars and professional ministers but not nearly as many

spiritual fathers. Many scholars and professional ministers in the Church today can deliver eloquent, impressive sermons that touch our minds and thoughts. But where are the fathers? Some religious colleges and seminaries today seem bent on mass-producing teachers. But who is attempting to produce spiritual fathers?

Will the Church allow a leadership of orators, educators and instructors to forever rob her of the spiritual blessings which only spiritual fathers can bring her? The world has the service of thousands of learned scholars, but the Church is still crying out for the ministry of true spiritual fathers. The Church does not need any more computer-like men with memory banks full of dry Biblical information to instruct the unlearned in the ways of the Lord. She needs true spiritual fathers who can lead her in the ways of the Lord. The Church needs men who have a heart for the people of the Lord and a compassion for the needy.

A computer presents information without love, mercy or understanding. A leader will show as much love, mercy or understanding as a computer shows, if he does not have the heart of a father. The Church needs more than just Biblical knowledge or instruction. She needs the very heart and life of her spiritual fathers to be imparted to her. The impartation of spiritual life, however, can't be taught from a college textbook in a college classroom. Spiritual life can only be learned in a close relationship with God, God's people, and the spiritual example of true fathers in the faith.

The Father's Heart of Jesus

Let's first look at the characteristics of a father's heart in the life of the ultimate example to all leaders, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was the full exploration of the heart of the heavenly Father on earth. His words, His ways, and His actions all manifested the heart of the Father. Accordingly, Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30) and "He who has seen me has seen the Father, how do you say 'Show us the father?'...The Father abiding in me does His works" (John 14:9c, 10c). The list below shows some of the father's-heart attitudes of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the example to all of God's leaders.

Compassion	"When He saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion." (Matthew 9: 35-36).
Concern	A Pharisee asked one of Christ's disciples, "Why does your Master eat with publicans and with sinners?" and Jesus replied, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." (Matthew 9:11-13).
Willingness	There came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You will, You can make me clean.' And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, 'I will, be thou clean.' (Matthew 8:1-3).
Humility	Jesus gave us a new definition of humility: "Except you be converted as a little child, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3; also see Philippians 2:5-10).
Warmth	"Mary has chosen the better part," Jesus said to Martha, in explaining why Mary shouldn't have to leave her listeners' place at the feet of Jesus to busy herself with service. (Luke 10:38-42; also see John 12:1-8).
Forgiveness	Jesus also gave us a new definition of forgiveness. On the cross: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34). In the tale of the prodigal son: "When the son was a great way off: his father saw him and had great compassion on him and ran and embraced him, and kissed him." (Luke 15:32). To a prostitute taken in sin: "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more." (John 8:11).
Brokenness	Jesus laid down all His heavenly authority in coming to earth, and was the model of brokenness for all leaders. "He groaned in His

	spirit and was troubled ...and Jesus wept.” (John 11:33-36). “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, He lamented,...how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not!” (Matthew 24:37).
Self-sacrifice	Jesus showed us how to pay the ultimate price. “I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:15).
Service	Jesus also showed us that no service was unimportant or without dignity. “If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14).

Fatherly Gentleness

In I Thessalonians 2:7 Paul states, “But we were gentle among you.” In the Amplified Bible, this verse reads, “But we behaved gently when we were among you, like a devoted mother nursing and cherishing her own children.” The word “gentle” in the original Greek means: to be friendly, mild or kind. Greek writers frequently used this word to characterize a nurse with crying children or a teacher with difficult pupils. The word describes a nursing mother.

Gentleness is another attitude to be found in the heart of a father. Gentleness describes the loving, fatherly touch that all children must have during their development. Without this gentleness, children will be unbalanced. The Bible requires gentleness of all those who are going to take responsibility in the house of the Lord. Without gentleness, a strong leader will injure the people of God.

The list of Scripture references below on gentleness will exhort every leader to allow the Lord to develop this quality in his life.

II Timothy 2:24	“The servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle”, Paul told his disciple Timothy.
Titus 3:2	“They are not to be brawlers, but to be gentle.”
James 3:17	“But the wisdom from above is first pure, peaceable, gentle.”
II Corinthians 10:1	“I, Paul beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”
Galatians 5:22	“The fruit of the Spirit is...longsuffering, gentleness, goodness and faith.”

A spiritual father in the house of the Lord must develop gentleness. This heart attitude will allow the leader to teach sensitive and difficult subjects in the Church without spiritually hurting or permanently offending the people of God. Gentleness will cause the people to listen and to respond to the more serious admonitions that a leader feels he must give.

Fatherly Nursing

I Thessalonians 2:7 states, “but we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children.” In the New Testament Greek, a “nurse” nourishes children, to the point of fattening them, cherishing them with choice foods. This word denotes a mother who nurses her children before they are weaned. It describes the mother who would take the most anxious and tender care of her little ones.

In the context of this Scripture, we have the apostle Paul speaking to a church he had begotten in the gospel. In the next verse (I Thessalonians 2:8), Paul described the outworking of a father’s heart. He said, “So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear unto us.” The apostle Paul imparted to the Thessalonians not only the gospel, but his own life and energy as well. What Paul gave to these Christians can be seen in the feelings expressed by a mother who nurses her own child. This is the true picture of a “nursing father,” in the masculine sense, as it relates not only to the apostle Paul, but also to every leader.

Acts 13:18 give us an account of how the Lord nursed His people Israel in Old Testament times. This verse states, "God suffered their manners in the wilderness." The Septuagint translation puts it this way: "God bare, as a nursing Father, the people of Israel." Similarly, Deuteronomy 1:31 states, "In the wilderness where You have seen that the Lord my God bare you as a man does bare his son." The Hebrew word for "bare" means: to built up, support, foster (as a parent), to nurse or render firm or faithful in all dealings. Numbers 11:12 speaks of Moses in this sense of the word. Moses was a nursing father to the Israelites (cf. Isaiah 40:11 and 49:23).

For all that the nation of Israel did to offend the Lord, He was still patient with them and cared for them. He was a nursing Father unto the people. Moses was a nursing father to Israel, also. This attribute of being like a nurse was worked into the life of Moses through all of the experiences of the people of Israel. Moses never wanted to trade Israel for a better nation, though the Lord proposed it. Moses never asked the Lord to judge them too harshly. He was a true father-nurse. May it be the same with every leader!

Fatherly Cherishing

Paul stated that he treated the Thessalonians Christians "as a nurse cherishes her children." The Greek word for "cherish" means: to warm, to brood over and foster, to cherish with tender love, care for with tender love, and to show compassion. The Septuagint uses this word to describe a bird caring for its young by spreading its feathers over them in the nest. (see Deuteronomy 22:6 and Matthew 23:37).

A spiritual father in the family of God will spread his protective and loving wings over the small or weak of the flock while they are still in the nest, to protect them from the attacks of vultures. This is another expression of the father's heart in the work of leading. (For example, see I Thessalonians 2:8,11; Philippians 2:22; I Timothy 3:1; Ephesians 5:29.) We think of leading as handling adults skillfully, cleverly and running at "tight ship." But God thinks of leading as nursing, caring, being gentle, serving, teaching and loving children.

The Example of Husbandry

The tender care and feeding of a young plant so that it grows properly to a healthy maturity is another beautiful illustration of the words gentleness, nursing and cherishing. Plants may suffer from many different maladies during their lives. They may suffer from vegetation diseases, insect damage, environmental changes, or damage from sheer neglect. Some plants are more tender than others. Some will suffer severely by neglect, where others will appear to thrive on it. But even an old sturdy standby plant can be affected drastically by neglect or environmental change.

A plant's appearance and growth indicate the state of its health. Early stages of ailment and ill health are usually very subtle. Unless the gardener knows the plant through close relationship, he will not discern the problem until devastating symptoms occur. Stages of severe defoliation and withering are not the time for the gardener suddenly to examine the plant for the cause of ill health. Unfortunately, this kind of emergency help is found too often in the vineyard of God's people.

To prevent his plants from reaching a state of emergency, the gardener must discern the need of the plant in its early stages. In doing so, the gardener will save his plant from death-and perhaps others around it. The husbandman must use preventative measures to ensure the health of his vineyard.

Applying the wrong therapy to any plant problem is very wasteful. And if the supposed remedy is too strong, the plant might not survive it. As a discerning father, the husbandman must be alert to meet the various needs of his plants. Some plants will need to be re-potted. For others, re-potting could be a sure end. Some plants need more room for their roots to reach maturity. Others need their roots trimmed and even to be put into a smaller pot. Needs vary, and rule-of-thumb gardening simply doesn't work. Some plants may appear very beautiful on the surface, but beneath the soil have rotten and dead roots. Surprisingly enough, over-watering can cause this. A husbandman may also kill his plants by too much exposure to sunlight. Every plant needs water and sunlight in different amounts. To meet every plant's need according to its nature and level of maturity requires a wise and experienced husbandman.

All that can be said of the natural elements of plant husbandry can also be said of leading the children of the Lord. A father-hearted Christian leader will discern and minister to the different

needs and maturity levels of the people of God. This ability is the fruit of a father's gentle, cherishing and nursing heart of love. The following chart on "Spiritual Husbandry" illustrates the parallel between husbandry and spiritual leadership.

Spiritual Husbandry Principles	
The Wise and Experienced Husbandman Gives to the Plants:	The Father-Hearted Leader Gives to the people of God:
Sunlight	Light of God's Word
Water	Water of God's Spirit
Cultivation	Training for ministry
Pruning	Fatherly discipline
Proper environment	Proper church atmosphere of God's presence
New pot and soil	New lifestyle in Christ.
Treatment for ailments	Help and counsel for problems
Early detection of disease	Observation of any problems in their early stages
Room for growth	Room to grow and exercise ministry

Spiritual Husbandry Application

A spiritual husbandman, who has a father's heart, will therefore pursue the following practices in caring for God's people:

- Provide the spiritual nourishment for balanced Christian growth.
- Deal tenderly with the people of the Lord.
- Discern the needs of the children of God at any stage of their development.
- Be gentle and loving in relationships with the people of the Lord.
- Consistently attend to the spiritual, emotional, physical or mental needs of the children of God.

Fatherly Nurture and Admonition

Ephesians 6:4 effectively expresses the fatherly attitude of nurture and admonition: "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The Amplified Bible translates this verse: "Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger-do not exasperate them to resentment-but rear them (tenderly) in the training and discipline and counsel and admonition of the Lord." In this chapter, the apostle Paul was teaching about raising a family. He was giving principles a father must follow in bringing up his children. The attitudes and principles a natural father needs to raise his natural children are those a spiritual father needs in raising his spiritual children. The house of the Lord needs these guidelines to rear its children in a balanced way. Paul used two words, "nurture" and "admonition," to illustrate this balance.

A study of the Greek word for "nurture" brings out an entirely different meaning than we find in today's English. In the New Testament Greek, the word "nurture" meant: to promote the development of a child by teaching, supporting and encouraging him during the different stages of his growth. It meant: to tutor or educate a child by training, discipline or correction. To nurture was to chastise with the intent of molding character into the child. The word included the idea of training and educating children, of cultivating their minds and/or morals by correcting and reproving them with words and actions.

Nurture. The word "nurture" is translated several different ways in the King James Version, with three primary forms being: instruction, learning and chastening. (See II Timothy 3:16; I Timothy 1:20; Timothy 2:25; Hebrews 12:5; Acts 7:22 and Revelation 3:19). Jesus illustrates the heart attitude of nurturing in His teaching. The Lord Jesus was a man of true love and compassion for all people. This did not stop Him from speaking the truth in a way that sometimes offended many people. He offended not only the hypocritical religious leaders of Israel, but also His own disciples. (See Matthew 15:12; Mark 14:27, and John 6:60-62 for examples.) In the New

Testament, nurture does not mean gently nursing to maturity, but the strong teaching a child needs to mature in the Lord.

In Ephesians 6:4 Paul was not focusing on a father’s love for his children, though that was not absent from the verse. Paul was focusing on the responsibility of a father to teach his children. Paul was giving an important change to fathers: "If they desire to raise their children correctly, they must have the “heart and the hand” to teach them in a very firm manner."

The ministry of a spiritual father includes strong teaching. A true spiritual father must be prepared to strongly correct his spiritual children. He must mold the character of the child through teaching that is hard and grievous for the child at times, but that is still necessary. The word “nurture” that Paul used in Ephesians 6:4 was not the tender word that many people think it was. Today, the Church desperately needs spiritual fathers who have the courage to nurture her to full maturity by discipline, correction and chastening.

Admonition. The word translated “admonition” in Ephesians 6:4 meant: calling attention to something by mild rebuke, warning and exhortation (as from the Lord). Literally, it meant: putting into the mind. The word involved training by verbal encouragement, or, if necessary, verbal reproof and protest. The Greek word translated as admonition or warning is “*noutheto*.” The following list of Scriptures shows the different ways in which the New Testament translates this word:

Acts 20:31 – “ceased not to warn every man night and day.”

Romans 15:4 – “able to admonish one another.”

I Corinthians 4:14 – “but as my beloved sons, I warn you.”

Colossians 3:16 – “admonishing one another in psalms and hymns.”

I Thessalonians 5:12 – “those that admonish you.”

“Admonition” is a strong disciplinary word describing a very important attitude of a spiritual father: a spiritual father must put into the mind of the child the teachings that he alone knows the child needs for spiritual development and a healthy future. It takes constant exhortation and strong encouragement in righteousness to reach this goal.

All spiritual fathers in the Lord must decide to admonish. God’s children need strong rebuke at times to reach maturity. Many teachers today would prefer to teach only what is pleasing, and will keep people coming back. That is not always what people need. A spiritual father must discern the precise needs of God’s people. Through strong exhortation and teaching, he must impart it to them.

A Balanced Father’s Heart

Every leader must balance the heart attitudes of a spiritual father that have been presented in this study. Nurture and admonition must stay in balance with gentleness, nursing and cherishing. Nurture and admonition are strong words which describe a leader’s ministry of correction and discipline to God’s people. These are needed, but are incomplete by themselves. The people of the Lord will not respond to the leader who speaks only rebuke and warning, who has hardened his heart in a one-sided pursuit of discipline. God’s leaders must weep with the people. They must feel their burdens and heavy hearts in order to minister effectively. Gentleness, love, mercy and warmth must go with discipline.

The life of the apostle Paul demonstrates all of these attitudes. His ministry, a powerful one, was not composed exclusively of rebuke, chastisement and discipline. He also had a heart of gentleness, love, mercy and compassion. The parallel columns, below, show this balance by contrasting fatherly attitudes at work in his ministry. Like two sides of the same coin, each of the balanced attitude areas in this list must go together to make a complete whole.

To Nurture and Admonish	To Love and Cherish
# Discipline	# Responsibility
“I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan” (1 Corinthians 5:1-8)	“In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel” (I Corinthians 4:15)
# Rebuke	# Love
“I praise you not” (I Corinthians 11:17)	“that you might know the love that I have especially for you” (II Corinthians 2:4)

# Chastisement	# Relationship
“I made you sorry with a letter” (II Corinthians 7:8)	“I speak unto you, my children” (II Corinthians 6:11-13)
# Correction	# Gentleness
“If I come again I will spare not” (II Corinthians 13:1-2)	“I, Paul, beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (II Corinthians 10:1)
# Forthrightness	# Reconciliation
“O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you” (Galatians 3:1-3)	“Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness...bear you one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:1-2)
# Responsibility	# Compassion
“Yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes” (Philippians 1:24)	“Now I tell you even weeping” (Philippians 3:18)

The illustration of a balance shown below depicts the balance of discipline and love each leader must maintain in his ministry. If developed, both of these important sides of a leader’s life will together maintain balanced growth for the Church.

A Balanced Father’s Heart

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Nurture | 1. Love |
| 2. Admonition | 2. Gentleness |
| 3. Instruction | 3. Nourishment |
| 4. Correction | 4. Forgiveness |
| 5. Chastisement | 5. Patience |
| 6. Authority | 6. Nursing |
| 7. Rebuke | 7. Kindness |
| 8. Warning | 8. Praise |
| 9. Truth | 9. Mercy |
| 10. Judgement | 10. Justice |

The heart of a spiritual father normally appears only in older people. Both years and experience are required to develop its characteristics. A younger person gains a father’s heart only through early cultivation of certain attitudes and principles in his life.

In our day, many groups emphasise the academic and social preparation of a leader. The Bible, however, puts a far greater emphasis on the character and attitudinal preparation of a leader. It is possible to prepare a person’s intellect for the ministry without preparing a person’s heart. The person who desires to help the people of God mature spiritually will seek God’s help in developing the heart attitudes of a spiritual father.

The Leader and the Heart of a Servant

A leader most people would say, is a person who directs, administrates, organizes, makes decisions, delegates responsibilities, and plans for the future. This definition lacks a very essential part of true leadership: a leader is one who serves. A leader of God’s people must have the inner attitudes and motivations, and the outer service, of a servant.

Hebrew Meanings. The Old Testament translates several Hebrew words as “servant.” Each presents a certain portion of truth concerning the heart of a servant.

“Ebed”. Our first Hebrew word for servant; “ebed”, generally means: a slave or a servant. It is used in several applications, all of which apply quite well to a definition of a ministry of leadership. “Ebed” applies to a person who is at the complete disposal of another person (Genesis 24:1-67). A leader of God’s people must be at the complete disposal of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of those whom he is called to serve. A person who works for a master is also described as “ebed” (Deuteronomy 15:12-18). In the same way, a leader must work for his master the Lord Jesus Christ. All his work is offered as a labor to Christ, and also to those whom he is called to serve.

This word also applies to a slave who has given up all of his personal rights to serve his master (Deuteronomy 15:12-18). A Church leader must give over all his personal rights to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to those whom he is called to serve. An “ebed” is also a slave in the service of a king (I King 1:9-47). A Christian leader must be a love –slave of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the king above all earthly kings. Finally, this word also applies to a person who serves in attendance to the temple sanctuary (I Samuel 3:9). A Christian leader must tend the true temple of God, the Church, with his worship toward God and his service to God’s people. (For further studies on “ebed,” also see Genesis 26:15-24, and 32:4-5; Numbers 12:7; Deuteronomy 7:8; Joshua 1:1-2,13, 15 and 24:29; I Samuel 3:9-10 and 29:3; Isaiah 20:3 and 49:3; Jeremiah 33:22; Joel 2:29; Zechariah 1:6 and 3:8.)

‘Abad’. Another Hebrew word for servant, “abad,” generally means to work and (in any sense)to serve. This word also has a variety of applications which help define Church leadership. A person who tills the ground is an “abad” (Genesis 2:5; 3:23). A leader of God’s people must work at breaking up the fallow ground of their hearts so that they can receive the seed of the Word of God. This word also applies to a person who dresses or keeps a garden (Genesis 2:15); A leader of the Church must dress and keep God’s vineyard, the Church of Jesus Christ. The name of “abad” also applies to a priest who serves the people (Numbers 18:7,23). A Christian must lay down his life in sacrificial service to those whom God has called him to serve. (For further studies on “abad”, see Exodus 23:25; Deuteronomy 4:19, 28; Joshua 22:5,27; I Samuel 12:14, 20; Psalm 22:20 and 72:1; Joel 2:22-23; Jeremiah 34:14; Ezekiel 29:20 and 36:9; Malachi 3:18.)

‘Sakiyr’. A third Hebrew word for servant, “sakiyr,” generally means: a person who works for wages by day or by year. This word has variety of useful applications in defining conditions of Church leadership. The “sakiyr,” as a hired servant, could not eat the Passover of his master’s family (Exodus 12:3-45). A leader of the Church must forsake the attitude of “paid professionalism.” To eat of the true Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, he must by faith enter into the relationship of love-slave to the Lord, rather than paid servant. The hired servant was not a love-slave (Leviticus 25:39-42). A Christian leader must come to a point in his life where he forsakes a religion of legalism that protects his rights. He must move into personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, where his total self is given in exchange for Christ. A “Sakiyr” was not worth half of the amount that a love slave was worth (Deuteronomy 15:18). A leader must realize that ministry and activities not motivated by the love God are not worth half as much as those motivated out of a love relationship. A “sakiyr” may also be a sojourner who is taken into a house as a slave (Leviticus 25:6). A leader of the Church must recognize that he was once only wandering stranger before Jesus Christ bought him with His own blood and established him in the house of God. (Other Scriptures which use the word “sakiyr” are Exodus 22:14-15; Leviticus 19:13 and 22:10 and 25:40, 50, 53.)

‘Sharath’. A fourth Hebrew word for servant, “sharath,” usually means a person who is a doer of menial and insignificant tasks. A priest who ministers or serves in his priestly office is called a “sharath” (Exodus 28:35-43). A leader of the Church must perform seemingly insignificant tasks to fulfill his role as a servant-priest. This word also applies to a priest who ministers continually before the ark of the covenant (I chronicles 16:37). A leader is held responsible to continually receive power for service by entering into the presence of the Lord with praise and worship. Joshua was a “sharath” to Moses (Exodus 24:13; Numbers 11:28). A leader of God’s people has authority only as he is under proper authority, serving those over him with a servant’s heart.

Greek Meanings. The New Testament uses a Greek word for servant, “doulos,” which gives us a very good word picture of a servant’s heart. Generally “doulos” signifies bondage, but most commonly applies to a servant who has willingly bonded himself to a master, by some legal obligation. Paul the apostle uses this word to describe himself in several of his epistles:

Romans 1:1	“Paul a servant (doulos) of Jesus Christ”
Philippians 1:1	"Paul a servant (doulos) of Jesus Christ"
Titus 1:1	“Paul a servant (doulos) of God”

The Love-slave

The Old Testament provides the Hebrew background for this concept in Deuteronomy 15:1-23. When it came time for a master to release a slave after six years of service, according to the Mosaic Covenant, the slave had two options. The slave could accept his total freedom with no legal obligations to his master. Or he could stay in his master's house as love-slave. If he chose to stay in his master's house as a love-slave, he was far more valuable to his master than the slaves who worked only to fulfill a debt or some other legal obligation. The servant who became a love-slave said to his master, in essence, "Because it is well with me as your slave, and because I love you and your household, I will serve you forever on the basis of my deep love for you."

Paul was this kind of a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, like any other leader of the Church, was bought with the price of the blood of Jesus Christ. He realized he could never pay back this debt by working with a "for-hire" mentality. He desired nothing less than a relationship where his work and service was motivated purely from willingness and love.

The most effective leaders in the kingdom of God are those who serve the Lord only out of a desire to love Him. Such leaders do not serve for money, reputation, position, power or selfish advantage, even though their service means long hours of pressure and sacrifice. The leader with a servant's heart, who is secure in his personal relationship with the Lord and does not have to prove himself, is able to serve sincerely with no desire for personal profit or fame.

THE HEART OF A LEADER

Ten principles / conditions for effective leadership

1. Manhood God makes first the man and then his ministry.
2. Ministry Power and demonstration, anointing, fruitful, positive.
3. Message Balanced, Biblical, speaking truth in love.
4. Maturity Good relationships, character, faithful, approved.
5. Marriage His marriage must reflect Christ and the Church.
6. Methods Righteous, ethical, honest, integer, upright.
7. Manners Unselfish, kind, patient, discreet.
8. Money Love for money / wealth corrupts.
9. Morals Diligent, pure and transparent relations.
10. Motives To serve or to dominate? For God or ambition?

The true heart of a leader is:

- A great sense of responsibility for your subordinates.
- Leading people with a gentle spirit.
- Great love and concern for your people (shepherd or hireling?).
- Carrying their mistakes and failures with and for them (Ex. 32:32).
- The willingness to be their servant and to give your life for them.
- Following Jesus and challenging others to follow you likewise.

Leadership

- Doesn't mean that you have a better relationship with the Lord.
- Must first be recognized, than acknowledged and finally accepted.
- Must not be demanded from people, but given by God and man.
- Is not playing the boss over others by suppression and tyranny.
- Is not by violence and manipulation forcing others to obedience.
- Is not real when it is obeyed out fear.

Authority

When there is a lack of God's authority in the life of a leader, he will be insecure and subject to the tendency to keep control by manipulation to secure his position as a leader.

Love is very important for a leader. When he is unable to love himself, consequently he can't love others as he should do.

Result of this is, that many will fear such a leader, because he does not provide the necessary love, acceptance, protection, and security that is needed for proper spiritual growth.

As the shepherd is, so are the sheep. When these sheep become leaders, they often lead in the same way as they were led, for there was no other example. Realize how from generation to generation woman, children, nations and tribes suffered by the hands of dominant leaders who abused their God-given authority. We have to learn the way Jesus leads people and how he wants us to lead others.

Criteria for leadership:

A leader should find his security rather in his relationship with the Lord, than in his position as a leader, otherwise he is unable to cope properly with criticism on his leadership.

A leader must develop an open mind for his people and their ideas, even when he doesn't agree, he should take them seriously.

A leader must realize his limitations, and develop an attitude of thankfulness toward those who add new and fresh ideas to ours, so that he can make wise decisions with them.

A leader must realize that God can speak even through a child to him, and he needs to accept God's Word and authority exercised through them.

A leader must realize that his people are always more important than his goals. He must develop a people-mindedness rather than goal-mindedness, since people are his goal.

A leader should demand a responsible, loving, helping, serving attitude from himself, before he demands obedience from those under his leadership.

A leader must preach first to himself of what God expects from him, before he preaches to others about what he expects from them. He must practice what he preaches.

A leader has to create opportunities and challenges for his people to grow in the Lord. It will help them to develop responsibility and self-respect and, to grow in the maturity of Christ.

A leader should teach his people to depend on God rather than on himself. Finally he must make himself superfluous.

A leader should identify himself with the group. He should not create a distance between the "clergy and the layman," because of his position as a leader. He should value people for whom they are rather than for what they do.

Conclusion: When we develop these leadership-characteristics, it will be very easy for our people to accept our authority. They would like to follow us, since they see Christ in us.

QUESTIONS FOR A LEADER'S SELF - EVALUATION

The following list of questions will provide the shepherd or potential leader with a means of evaluating his own character development. What is God looking for in my leadership today? What specific qualities must I have to be a balanced leader? Am I a spiritual man? As you honestly reflect through the following questions to your own character, you will be able to assess your own development of leadership character.

- Do I stay in close communion with the Holy Spirit?
- Do I accept the Bible as the Word of God?
- Do I love God's people?
- Do I identify with God's people in a specific local church?
- Do I willingly submit to authority?
- Do I love the sinner and the backslider?
- Do I truly worship God with all of my heart?
- Do I have a strong prayer life?
- Do I have a mature attitude in pressure situations?
- Do I let another person finish a job that I begin without feeling any bitterness toward that person?
- Do I listen to and receive criticism?
- Do I accept it when someone else is assigned a job for which I am better qualified?
- Do I gloat self-righteously when someone else makes a mistake?
- Do I allow other people's opinions, or do I always have to argue for my point of view?
- Do I have inner peace during times of turmoil?
- Do I forgive someone who deliberately ignores me?
- Do I control my anger?
- Do I pass up certain present pleasures to achieve long term goals?
- Do I finish the projects that I begin?
- Do I put others before myself?
- Do I face unpleasant disappointments without any bitterness?
- Do I freely admit when I am wrong?
- Do I keep my promises and complete my commitments?
- Do I hold my tongue when it is best to do so?
- Do I accept and live in peace with the things I cannot change?

To Evaluate Co-laborers

The following list identifies some of the most important character qualities that a shepherd should look for when he chooses co-laborers:

Integrity	Guards a secret
Sharing the same spirit and burden	A spirit of sacrifice
Faithfulness	Does not require a salary of the Church
Commitment to the Church	Successful in a secular job
Right attitudes	Lives consistently with Bible principles
A shepherd's heart	Not addicted to the gods of this world
Stability	Good habits
An ability to get along with people	Doer of the Word
Deliberation in making decisions	Teachable spirit
A lover and enjoyed of other people	Love for God's House
Not domineering	Receives correction and changes
Gracious	Supportive, not competitive, towards others
Not a respecter of people	Submissive spirit
A savant's heart	Humble heart
Not a busybody	Transparent, open and honest nature

May every leader strive to develop these attitudes and qualities in his or her own life.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN LEADER

When God chooses, calls, separates and sends us out there are many things which He will require of us. The reason? It is a great responsibility to be a leader in the Kingdom of God. We can either lift up and glorify the Name of Jesus in the eyes of the world by our teaching and behavior, or we can slander and degrade it. And our followers in Christ look to us to set the example. Hebrews 13:7 states: "Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." Let us so live, that we can say like Paul: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1).

Study the list that follows carefully, **pray over it continually** and ask your heavenly Father to make it part of you and your calling. "By Him who has saved us and called us to a holy life-not because of anything we have done, but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time." (2 Tim 1:9). Remember that He Who calls, "...knows how we are formed, He remembers that we are dust." (Ps. 103:14). Despite this – or perhaps as a direct result of this – His blessing and anointing can rest upon us. "But He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9). Let us look at three examples. I believe God has given us these especially for our encouragement.

GIDEON was so afraid of the enemy that he hid away in a wine-press in order to thresh his corn. But, even though he was fearful, the Lord spoke to him and said, "The Lord is with you. Mighty warrior." (Judg. 6:11-12). "The Lord turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Median's hand. Am I not sending you?" "But Lord," Gideon asked "How can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down the Midianites." (Judg. 6:14-16).

JEREMIAH – "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.'" "Ah, Sovereign Lord," I said, 'I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.'" 'You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you, declares the Lord.'" (Jer. 1:4-8).

PAUL – It is encouraging to know that this apostle of our faith also started his ministry realizing his own weakness. "I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling." (1 Cor. 2:3).

God's Qualifications For A Leader After His Own Heart:

He must be obedient when God leads (Acts 16:9, 10).

He must be faithful to God's calling on his life through the power and grace in Christ Jesus (Rom. 15:17-19; 1 Tim 1:12). "...Discharge all the duties of your ministry" (2 Tim 4:5). Do not feel inferior if another servant of God has a greater anointing on his or her life than you have. Be yourself. Remember that the anointing on people's lives differs according to the different calling on their lives. God needs you with your character and talents under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Do not be discouraged if someone else is involved in a "greater" work than you are. We are not in competition in God's Kingdom. God is interested in faithfulness. It's not what you do, but how wholeheartedly you do what God has called, separated and sent you to do.

He must be qualified to teach (1 Tim. 3:2).

He must walk and minister uprightly. "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech..." (Titus 2:7). In other words, you must walk and minister uprightly.

Be a man or woman of your word by keeping your appointments and promises. Write them down in a diary. Guard against an overloaded program and learn to say "no" to demands you

cannot meet. Cancel many weeks in advance if you have accidentally made a double appointment. If you don't it will injure your good name as a servant of God.

He must be full of zeal and diligence. "...I worked harder than all of them..." (1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 10:12-16).

He must be an example of long-suffering to those who have become new disciples of Jesus (1 Tim. 1:16).

He must be irreproachable (in conduct) (1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:7). "Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise..." (Eph. 5:15). In other words, walk circumspectly (watchful, cautious, alert), but in wisdom so that you are not a stumbling block to others. II Timothy 2:16 and Titus 3:9 warn to "avoid godless chatter..."

He must be self-controlled and sober – or as the Greek puts it: "sober-minded, having the ability to be discriminate, sensible, tactful, balanced, calm, self-controlled." (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)

He must be respectable, well-mannered and decent (1 Tim. 3:2). For instance, if you stay with people when you are ministering somewhere, you should make your own bed and offer to help clean the rooms in the home, as a servant.

He must be humble, obliging, submissive, gentle, modest and tolerant. "Let your gentleness be evident to all." (Phil. 4:5). When we are continually prepared to be the least, God will lift us in His time (1 Pet. 5:6).

He must have a good reputation amongst outsiders (non-Christians) so that he would be free from reproach and would not fall into the devil's snare (1 Tim. 3:7). "Live such good lives among the pagans (unbelievers) that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us." (1 Pet. 2:12). At the same time Paul admonishes us in Colossians 4:5 to do it in wisdom.

He must be one who has compassion, or as Hebrews 5:2 puts it: "He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness." Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:29, "Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin and I do not inwardly burn?"

He must be a servant to everyone and be able to identify with them in order to be effective in winning them for Jesus (I Cor. 9:19-23). Some front-line ministers of the Gospel changed their original clothes and lifestyles to adapt themselves to the people and tribals they ministered to wherever they evangelized among them. By doing this, they were more effective in winning the lost souls for Christ than any other mission organization in the same region.

He must be one who loves what is good (Titus 1:8).

He must be Spirit-filled (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 6:6) and not neglect the gifts of the Spirit within him, but use them in love to the benefit of those among whom he labors (2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 1 Cor. 14:12).

He must be just – also in the sense of being upright (Titus 1:8) and impartial (1 Tim. 5:21). Titus 3:10-11 warns us against the dangers of divisions: "Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned."

He must love from a pure heart (1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Cor. 6:6). "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." (1 John 3:18). "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." (1 Pet. 4:8). "Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God." (1 John 3:21)

He must have a good conscience (1 Tim 1:5).

He must be holy and live a holy life (Titus 1:8; Col. 1:22). "...Train yourself to be godly" (1 Tim 4:7). "For the grace of God that brings salvation ...teaches us to say No to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age." (Titus 2:11-12).

A word of caution at this point: There is a very thin line between striving after holy living and falling into legalism. You can fulfill the righteous requirements of the law by the Spirit's enabling, but without being legalistic! You will save yourself – and those over whom God has appointed you – if, instead of striving for sanctification as such, you strive to be like Jesus Christ. It is interesting that Zechariah's anointed prophecy over Jesus in Luke 1:74b- 75 makes the same distinction: "...to enable us to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days." Legalistic efforts to live holy lives bring fear of judgment. True holiness produced by yielding to the Spirit does not produce fear. The key is surrender!

He must spend much time in prayer, meditation and reading and study of the Word (Acts 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:7). "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15).

He must preach the Word of God and, as a pastor, willingly keep watch over the flock – and not because the Lord requires it of Him (1 Pet. 5:2). "If I preach voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me." (1 Cor. 9:17). When we read the following Scriptures about pastors and their responsibilities, it becomes clear that they have a sobering and awesome responsibility before God: Ezekiel 34; Is. 40:11; Is. 42:19; Is. 56:9-12; Jeremiah 22; Jer. 23:1-4; Jer. 50:6- 7, 17, 19-20,44-45; Zech.10:1-3; Zech.11:4- 5, 15 – 17; Zech 9:16 and John 10:11-18.

He must continuously pray that he won't just be a shepherd who divides the Word correctly and who gives the sheep their food at the right time, but more especially that he will be a spiritual father to the believers (Phil. 2:22 and 1 Cor. 4:15).

He must proclaim the Word of God in season and out of season and, "correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction." (2 Tim 4:2). "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16- 17).

He must be one, "who holds firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught..." (Titus 1:9). Or, as Paul puts it to Timothy: "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." (1 Tim. 4:16).

He must have an unfeigned faith (1 Tim. 1:5) by the grace of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 1:14).

He must be willing to be reviled for and in his labour for the Lord. (1 Tim. 4:10 and 2 Cor. 6:8). He must persevere under tests, oppression and persecution (2 Cor. 11:23 – 33; 2 Tim. 2:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:3) and in the process not regard his life as precious to himself. He must be prepared to lay his life down for the Lord and others (Acts 20:22-24; 2 Cor. 6:9). "The reason My Father loves Me is that I lay down My life – only to take it up again". (John 10:17).

II Corinthians 6:1,3 – 10 sums the rest up effectively: "As God's fellow-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.... We put no stumbling-block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. "Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships, distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots and hunger. Work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; "With weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown, dying, and yet we live on; beaten and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything." The reason for this is that "everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2 Tim. 3:12).

He must be the husband of one wife, i.e. not a polygamist (Titus 1:6). It is commendable to work at good communication at all times between husband and wife. A leader may, however, be unmarried, as Paul was (1 Cor. 7:7-8).

He must be someone who manages his own family well. The Greek says, “to stand in front (in position), to preside, to take the chair, lead, manage”. “His children should submit to him as a result of his worthiness in every respect (or, as the Greek puts it) because of his dignity, stateliness and solemnity” (1 Tim. 3:4). It is also interesting to look at Titus 1:6 and 1 Timothy 3:4-5 to see how Abraham managed his household in the light of God’s conditional promise (Gen. 18:17 – 19). “He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s Church?” (1 Tim. 3:4- 5). Gen. 18:17 – 19: “Then the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. “For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him.” If we look at verse 18, it was – according to God’s vision and faithfulness – a sure promise. Yet, if we look at verse 19, it was (as all God’s promise are!) conditional on how Abraham taught his household in the fear of God and how he led by the example he set. Remember – as verse 17 indicates – Abraham was a friend of God, and it was this relationship that he was to teach his children by word, but also by demonstrating it through deeds. He had to be a father whom they could look up to and respect, but at the same time one with whom they could have a friendship, and subsequently share their hearts (compare verses 17, 20 – 33).

He must be hospitable, or as the Greek puts it, love strangers (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8). There must be willingness on his part to open up his house without any restrictions. “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (1 Pet. 4:9).

But all the leadership qualities mentioned would be useless if it is not done on the basis of Revelation 2:2-5: “I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claimed to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for My Name, and have not grown weary. “Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place.” To labor and suffer in every respect is not enough for God. First of all He longs for us to do the “first works”– works flowing forth out of that first love for God! Meditate on how you treat your bride or bridegroom – how you couldn’t do enough for that person, and especially how all you did and said focused around him or her. He will remove our lamp stands (i.e. the anointing on our lives and ministries that gives light to others) from its place, if we do not function in our first love.

I conclude with Wuest’s excellent translation of John 21:15b: “Do you have a love for Me called out of your heart by My preciousness to you, a devotional love that impels you to sacrifice yourself to Me?”

LEADERSHIP UNDER CHRIST

RESPONSIBILITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Note: Ex.18:13 – 26; Acts 20: 17 – 38; 1 Tim. 3:2 – 7; Tit. 1:5 – 9; Jas. 3:1, 13-18; 1 Pet. 5:1 – 10.
Outstanding Examples: Moses, David, Nehemiah, Paul.

Responsibilities of Leadership

THEIR LINE OF MINISTRY. Leaders are called of God to:

Serve the people by shouldering burdens (Is. 32:1 – 2; Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28).

Initiate (John 10:4; Neh. 2: 11 – 16; Phil. 4:9).

Guide (Ps. 23:3; 2 Sam. 5:2; Tit. 2:1 – 3).

Train (2 Tim 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:3; 2 Thes. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12).

Resolve disputes (Ex. 18:21-22; Jas. 3:1, 18).

Discipline (Tit. 3:10-11; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; 1 Thes. 5:12-14).

When we submit to governing authorities even in secular society we encounter the Rule of Christ in actual practice (Rom. 13:1 – 7).

THEIR LIMIT OF MEASURE. This is determined by God for each one.

God grants a measure of gift (Rom. 12:3, 6) and ministry (Eph. 4:7,11). The gift carried an inherent authority for its function.

He also marks out the measure of sphere, the prescribed area within which that specific leader should operate (2 Cor. 10:13-16). This calls for real honest assessment before God and before one's fellow leaders. Although Paul's apostolate extended to Corinth he did not appear to have a 'building permit' from heaven to found churches in Cyprus where Barnabas operated (Acts 15: 39). And in coming to Jerusalem he submitted to the eldership of the church there (Ac. 21:17 – 26).

The elders under Moses were given defined duties to specified groups of Israelites (Ex. 18:21).

Within the hallowed Godhead there exists co-equality of status (Phil. 2:6). Nevertheless, God operates according to an order of authority. The Father sent the Son (1 John 4:14), and Father and Son sent the Spirit. (John 14:16; Acts 2:33) who does not, "speak on His own initiative"(John 16:13). These are certain concerns which the Father "has fixed by His own authority" (Acts 1:7) which are not in the Son's measure-of-sphere (Matt. 24:36). The local expression of the Kingdom of God will reflect the ways of Royal Dynasty of the Eternal God. Neither latest charismatic crazes nor ancient traditions enter into the reckoning!

Qualifications for Leadership

A DIVINE COMMISSION

Ambition constitutes but one side of the coin (1 Tim. 3:1). A willingness to accept responsibilities must be "according to the will of God." (1 Pet. 5:1-2; Ps. 75:6-7). When God lays His hand on anyone for leadership He trains him in the School of life: Moses kept sheep in the desert, and David had to face his fears in Adullam's cave before the 'drop-outs' came under his captaincy. With the calling comes an anointing of authority.

PRACTICAL CAPABILITIES

Clarity of Mind. "Prudent" (1 Tim. 3:2) means: sound-minded. A leader must be able to think objectively, and should not practice double-mindedness. He has powers of concentration, and can 'switch-off' worries when he has rested his concern with God. (Acts 16:9, 25)

Vision. God envisioned Paul directly from heaven (Acts 26:16-19) and Timothy indirectly (2 Tim. 2:2). A true leader has ultimate goals that are great enough to throw his whole life into. And he can also set intermediate goals for the people en route to that ultimate (1 Cor. 16:1-11; 2 Cor. 8:10-11). He can also ‘see’ the potential within individuals and harness those abilities (2 Tim. 2:2).

Wisdom. (Jas. 3:1, 17; Acts 6:3). This fruit of the Spirit gives to a leader moderation in all things, preserving him from extravagance and eccentricity. He can gauge priorities in the use of his time (Neh. 6:3; Acts 6:7). He knows when to act swiftly and also when to let troubles come to a head before intervening. No amount of Bible knowledge by itself will substitute for this ingredient.

Aptitude to Teach. (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9). He need not have the ministry of a teacher, but must have some basic ability to convey his thoughts on any matter lucidly (understandable).

Ability to Delegate. (Neh. 7:1-3; Eph. 4:11-12; Ex. 18:13-26). A spiritual leader does not use people and domineer them; he cultivates and develops them into their true selves and unto their fulfillment in function.

A SOUND CHARACTER. Including such features as:

Godliness. He fears God (Ex. 18:21), and has a clear grasp of the faith (Tit. 1:7-9). He is man of faith and prayer (Jas. 5:14-18). But he is not marked by self-righteousness (Gal. 6:1). He acknowledges that all authority derives from God. (Rom. 13:1) and that he leads by the will of God and not by his own opinions. Therefore he keeps, in fellowship with God and with other men of God, and does not try to establish his own authority.

Integrity. He is without hypocrisy (Jas. 3:17). And is especially trustworthy in money matters (1 Pet. 5:2; Ex. 18:21; 1 Tim. 3:3). He puts things right honestly and honorably when he has sinned (Ps. 51:4).

Purity. (Jas. 3:17). His relationships are above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2).

Peace. (Jas. 3:17; 1 Pet. 5:7). He knows how to make the flock rest at noon (S.of S. 1:7), and can inspire tranquility of heart in a crisis (2 Chron. 32:7-8; Neh. 4:14). He is relaxed with superiors (Ex. 7:1 – 2).

Friendship. He has a saving sense of humour, being approachable and open to reason (Jas. 3:17). He puts subordinates at ease, being given to hospitality (1 Tim. 3:2); and is ready to receive help and advice from others (1 Sam. 25:32-35). You feel ‘he is one of us’ (Ex. 18:21; 2 Sam. 5:1-3).

Humility. (1 Cor. 15:9) the slave’s apron (1 Pet. 5:5; Mark 10:43-44).

Mercy. (Jas. 3:17; 1 Pet. 5:3). He frankly forgives, on the basis of repentance (Luke 17:3 – 4). But he does not bow to rebellion; e.g. Moses with Pharaoh, in contrast to his prayers for Miriam (Num. 12:1-15).

Fairness and impartiality. As a peacemaker (Jas. 3:17-18) he can listen to both sides of any argument without fear or favour.

Submission to, and co-operation with, those over him in the Lord. (Matt. 8:9).

Patience. (1 Tim. 3:3), especially with the weak (Rom. 15:1; Is. 40:11). Not passivity or fatalism, but endurance, strength held in restraint.

Anger at injustice to people and dishonour to God (Ex. 32:19-20). But without resentment and personal animosity. (Num. 20:10-12).

Diligence and self-discipline. (1 Tim. 3:2), particularly in the use of his tongue (Jas. 3:1-2).

Courage to follow the convictions of his faith (Neh. 6:10-11). “Here I stand”, declared Martin Luther: “I can do no other. God help me.” Caution and cowardice never venture into new territory, nor cope with discouragement and mutiny (1 Sam. 30:6), nor resist the pressures of the devil (1 Pet. 5:9).

Consistency and decisiveness. (2 Co. 1:15-24).

Flexibility. (Phil.4:5). He can face each fresh challenge with an open mind, knowing that God may have a different plan of campaign although the setting is a familiar one (2 Sam. 5:17-25).

Respect, not only in the eyes of the church (1 Tim. 3:2), but of the world (v.7). ‘Cranks’ don’t qualify! He manages his home well (1 Tim. 3:4-5) having the respect of his wife and children. More than that, he can inspire confidence, leading people into the performing of unpleasant tasks (Neh. 2:17-18). He can secure allegiance without a show of strength (Philemon 8-14, 21)

Experience both of life in general and life in Christ (1 Tim. 3:6).

Capacity for Growth. (Phil. 3:12-14; 2 Cor. 10:15-16; Rom. 15:23-24). He has no stagnant sense of having arrived. A shepherd is not required to vault hedges and sprint over mountains, but to plod a few paces ahead of the flock. A shepherd doesn’t himself have every thing that the flock requires, but the must see that they get it all.

Motivation. He is not a ‘wheel-barrow’ needing to be pushed, but a self-starter (1 Pet. 5:2).

Realism. E.g. Neh. 4:9 – “We prayed....andset up a guard.”

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP QUALITIES - Self-evaluation Questionnaire

A Christian leader should have several good qualities which are emphasized in the Bible. These qualities include the nine fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 which are: love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance or self-control. In addition to these nine spiritual qualities leaders should have several other qualities including wisdom, diligence, determination, truthfulness, boldness, creativity, etc. The Christian leader should also have several abilities and skills such as: ability to discipline, ability to teach, ability to communicate, diagnostic skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills, social skills, etc. Lastly they should have a good testimony, a good knowledge of the Word, power to influence others, willingness to serve others and genuine concern for others. While there is a close parallel between the business leadership qualities and Christian leadership qualities, the latter is more genuine, deeper and superior. The business leadership qualities are poor substitutes, shallow and inferior to the Christian leadership qualities. It is very importance to know what it takes to be good Christian leader. A Christian leader should know his strength and weaknesses and try to grow in the areas of his weaknesses. First of all, the leaders should know these leadership qualities; secondly, they should believe in these qualities; thirdly and lastly, they should try to develop these qualities. The parallel between the business and Christian leadership qualities are illustrated below.

BUSINESS VS. CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND SKILLS	
BUSINESS LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND SKILLS	CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND SKILLS
SELF CONFIDENCE	FAITH
PROVEN RECORD	GOOD TESTIMONY
EMPATHY	COMPASSION
EMOTIONAL STABILITY	PEACE
PATIENCE	LONG SUFFERING
ENTHUSIASM	JOY
BEING COURTEOUS	GENTLENESS
FAIRNESS	GOODNESS
SELF CONTROL	TEMPERANCE
NOT ARGUING	MEEKNESS
SOCIABILITY	LOVE
BEING GOAL ORIENTED	DOING THE WILL OF GOD
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILL	WISDOM
DEVELOPING SUBORDINATES	DISCIPLING
INTELLIGENCE	KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD OF GOD
CHARISMA	BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT
MOBILITY	DESIRE TO TRAVEL
ABILITY TO GIVE ORDERS	ABILITY TO TEACH
RISK TAKING	SACRIFICE
SETTING AN EXAMPLE	BEING A LIVING EXAMPLE
COMMUNICATION SKILL	BEING PERSUASIVE AND FORCEFULL IN COMMUNICATION
POWER TO CHANGE BEHAVIOUR	POWER TO TRANSFORM LIVES
LISTENING SKILLS	PERCEIVINGTHEMINDAND THOUGHTS
BEING A GOOD OBSERVER	OBSERVING WITH INTEREST AND CONCERN

BEING SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS	GENUINE CONCERN TO HELP OTHERS
COURAGE	BEING BOLD AS A LION
MAKING IMPROVEMENTS	BEING FULL OF GOOD WORKS
BEING ACTIVE	DILIGENT
BEING RESULTS ORIENTED	ABILITY TO FINISH THE WORK SUCCESSFULLY
OPENNESS	BEING TRANSPARENT
WILLINGNESS TO HELP	WILLINGNESS TO SERVE
BEING CONSIDERATE	BEING UNSELFISH
STIMULATING THE INTEREST OF OTHERS	BEING CAPTIVATING
HONESTY	TRUTHFULNESS
FORESIGHT	VISION
IMAGINATION	DREAM
INNOVATIVENESS	CREATIVITY
NOT CRITICIZING OR CONDEMNING OTHERS	RESTORING AND BUILDING THE SELF IMAGE OF OTHERS
CONDONING	FORGIVING

SELF-EVALUATION OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND ABILITIES

To know our own strengths and weaknesses of leadership qualities and abilities, we may use a self-evaluation questionnaire. This rating scale is designed to evaluate leaders base on twenty leadership qualities and abilities. Under each quality five statements are given ranging from A to

The statement “A” is the best position, whereas the statement ‘E’ is the worst position for anyone to be in. The purpose of this form is to help individuals see for themselves what their present condition is and how much they have to grow in that dimension. Each statement is descriptive. It is also written with a sense of humour to illustrate a point effectively. The statements under ‘A’ have a Scriptural basis. Growth is always progressive. If a person is at a third level on a particular dimension, he will know that he has to grow two more steps in that dimension. This is very useful and practical tool for self-evaluation and self-development.

SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

(EVALUATE YOUR OWN LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND ABILITIES)

FAITH

- All things are possible to him that believes.
- Many things are possible to him that believes.
- Few things are possible to him that believes.
- No one can be sure of anything.
- What is faith?

COMPASSION

- I am tender hearted.
- I have a soft corner in my heart for everyone.
- It depends.
- I am not easily moved.
- I have a heart of stone.

PEACE

- Have perfect peace and nothing can disturb it.
- Calm and relaxed even when there is a problem.
- Generally calm and relaxed.
- There is something to worry about all time.

Look for a problem to worry.

JOY

Rejoice in tribulation.
Can smile in any situation.
Can smile only if things go well.
Look sad normally.
Always look sad and cannot help it.

WISDOM

I can quickly identify and solve any problem.
I can handle most of the problems.
I can pretty good in problem solving.
I do not know what the problem is.
I have my own problems to deal with.

ABILITY TO DISCIPLE

I am like Paul in discipling and have many followers.
I have discipled some and have a few followers.
I am willing to disciple some persons.
No one likes to follow me.
I need some one to disciple me.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD OF GOD

I can quote Scriptures backward and forward.
I have a good knowledge of the Word.
I have a fair knowledge of the Word.
I should read the Word more.
Is there any easy way to know the Word?

BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

I have a double portion of the Holy Spirit.
I have a single portion of the Holy Spirit.
I guess I have the Holy Spirit.
I have my own good sprit.
My problem is to be delivered from the alcoholic spirit.

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

I would like to be a globe-trotter.
I would like to travel to some countries.
I only like to travel within my country's borders.
I believe in staying where the Lord has put me.
I hate to travel.

ABILITY TO TEACH

I am a born teacher, and teaching is my natural instinct.
I love to teach and have the patience to do it.
I would love to teach, if I have the opportunity.
Teaching is a very hard job.
Teaching would be the last thing that I would like to do.

SACRIFICE

I am willing to lay down my life for my sheep.
I would not risk my life, but would do my best to protect my sheep.
My responsibility is only to feed my sheep.
I would like to ride on my sheep if I can.
I wish I could eat my sheep.

BEING A LIVING EXAMPLE

Follow me as I follow Christ.
I am not the perfect example.
I am better than many.
Follow me at your own risk.
Follow me if you want to fall into the ditch with me.

SPEAKING WITH AUTHORITY AND POWER

When I open my mouth to speak, people are astonished at my wisdom.
I am a powerful speaker.
I am trying hard to be forceful and persuasive in communication.
No one likes to listen to me.
My problem is to force myself to speak.

ABILITY TO TRANSFORM LIVES

If any one would meet me once, they would never be the same again.
My life has had a great impact on the lives of many people.
I can influence others to some extent.
I am easily influenced by others.
My problem is to change my own life.

GENUINE CONCERN FOR THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

I cannot eat when others are hungry.
I am willing to share some of my food with others.
After I finish eating, if there is any food left, I will give it to others.
I feel sorry for those who have no food to eat.
It is not my responsibility to feed everybody.

BOLDNESS

I am as bold as a lion
I am bold when the lion is in a cage.
I am scared of lions no matter where they are.
I am chicken to be honest.
I am afraid of chicken.

BEING FULL OF GOOD WORKS

In good works, I am second only to Mother Theresa.
I have done a lot of good works.
I believe in good works and am doing the best I can.
I cannot do much of any work.
To be honest, I would be happy if I am laid off from my work.

DILIGENCE

I work like a bull.
I work hard but not like a bull.
I am a unionized bull and I do fair day's work.
I would like to ride on a bull.
I would like to put the bull to work.

ABILITY TO FINISH THE WORK

I cannot sleep until I finish the work.
I can sleep, but I will dream about the work in my sleep.
I will finish the work but would not want my sleep to be disturbed.
I have the habit of sleeping on the job.
My problem is to wake up to start the job.

DREAMING

- I am a dreamer like Joseph.
- I am quite imaginative and get many new ideas.
- I do have some good ideas.
- I am good at borrowing ideas.
- What is an idea?

SCORING SYSTEM				
Number of A's _____	X	5 points	=	_____ points
Number of B's _____	X	4 points	=	_____ points
Number of C's _____	X	3 points	=	_____ points
Number of D's _____	X	2 points	=	_____ points
Number of E's _____	X	1 points	=	_____ points
		TOTAL	=	_____ points

INTERPRETATION	
90 - 100 points	= Excellent leader
80 - 89 points	= Good leader
60 - 79 points	= Average leader
40 - 59 points	= Poor leader
20 - 39 points	= Not fit to be a leader
0 - 19 points	= Dangerous to be a leader

The lists of leadership qualities given so far in this study are not exhaustive by any means. There are many more leadership qualities. The leader should have a high degree of achievement orientation, skill, competence, self-confidence, emotional stability, being innovative, friendliness, trust and confidence in his subordinates, empathy, integrity, initiative and adaptability. If the leader has the right qualities and abilities, he will be able to fulfill his obligations well.

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

“God exalted him.....as Leader _____” (Acts 5:31)

WHY SPIRITUAL LEADERS ARE GREATLY NEEDED.

- they take initiative for God : Judg. 5:2; 2 Chron. 14:2-4
- they receive & communicate God’s direction : Ex. 25:22; Deut. 5:5
- they lead the way for God’s people. : Deut. 10:11; 2 Chron. 34:31-33
- they motivate others to follow : Neh. 2:17-18; 1 Chron. 12:16
- they care for their followers : Heb. 13:17; 1 Thes. 2:11
- they take their followers’ needs to God : Numb. 27:5; 1 Sam. 12:23
- they facilitate their followers’ progress : 1 Kings 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:9-10
- they train their followers into leaders : Mark 1:17; 2 Tim. 2:2

B. NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP COMPARED

NATURAL

Ambition
Self – reliance
Following human wisdom
Optimism
Desire to be served
Special privileges
Power of personality
Standard of success

SPIRITUAL

Humility
Dependence upon God
Seeking God’s direction
Faith
Desire to serve
Special opportunities for service
Godliness
Standard of faithfulness

C. THE FAVOURITE BIBLICAL PICTURE FOR A LEADER

The Shepherd:

God : Gen. 49:24; Ps. 23; 78:52; 80:1; 95:7; Is. 40:11; Ezech. 34:11-22.

Jesus : Mich. 5:4; John 10:1 – 18, 26-28; I Peter 2:25; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 7:17.

Other Biblical leaders: 2 Sam. 7:7; Ps. 77:20; 78:70-72; John 21:15; Acts 20:28.

(Moreover, see Numb. 27:17; Jer. 3:15; 23:1-4; Ezech. 34:2-10; Zech. 10:3)

GOD’S PROVISION FOR COPING WITH LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

His call: 1 Cor. 1:26-28; Rom. 11:29

His grace: 2 Cor. 3:5; 1 Cor. 15:10

His power: Col. 1:29; Phil. 4:13

His wisdom: James 1:5; 1 Cor. 1:30

His guidance: John 14:26; Jer. 33:3

His peace: 1 Cor. 14:33; Phil. 4:7

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP ENDANGERED

Insecurities: e.g. Fear, self doubt, discouragement.

Pressures: e.g. Loneliness, busyness, tension of priorities, lack of finances.

Temptations: e.g. Pride, envy, greed, ambition, abuse of privileges

Attacks: e.g. Criticism, accusations, rejection, satanic oppression.

SAFE GUARDS FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

- Love for Jesus : John 21:15-17
- Humility : James 4:6
- God’s Word : Ps. 119:105
- Seeking God : 2 Chron. 17:3-5; 12:14
- A clear conscience : Titus 1:19; Acts 24:16
- God’s anointing : 1 John 2:27-28

- Prayer support : 2 Cor. 1:11; 1 Thes. 5:25
- Godly counsel : Prov. 11:14; Ex. 18:17-24

SPIRITUAL LEADERS ARE MADE RATHER THAN BORN.

Potential leadership aptitude, in order to become properly developed, especially requires teachability, discipline and training (Prov. 12:24).

Even with a more limited leadership aptitude, one can with the Holy Spirit's help, grow up to become an effective leader for God. (1 Sam 2:7).

THREE PILLARS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Living a godly life.

Practicing servanthood.

Setting an example for servanthood.

For Further Consideration:

Ponder over the variety of expressions used to describe different facets of the Lord Jesus' leadership. (e.g. Is. 9:6; Rev. 1:5; 17:14; Acts 5:31; I Peter 5:4; Heb. 6:20; 12:2)

WISE LEADERS

A wise leader always states his point very clearly without repeating it, nor does he try to prove it; otherwise, it will create an argument, and it will lose its strength and purpose.

A wise leader avoids quarrelling, regardless of the issue involved, knowing that through quarreling the truth is always lost, and the issues are never resolved, but rather become more complicated.

A wise leader knows that one of the greatest tricks of Satan is to make us think that we are further in God than we really are, and saves himself from this deception by proper estimation which only comes by the Spirit.

A wise leader's criticism is usually done with extreme carefulness, right motives and a sweet attitude using wise and choice and clear words with a revelation of the wrong done, and the answer to remedy the situation. Thus it is constructive.

The wise leader evaluates the aggression levels of his opponents, as well as their strengths and proceeds carefully and wisely after his discovery.

A wise leader is generous with his aid in counseling in every way, due to being a loving and big-hearted person.

Concerned leaders are torn between choosing guilt when slowing down, and choosing stress when they overdo it. Only the wise among them finds the balance, and safety he needs.

A leader must be a man who is knowledgeable and endowed with divine wisdom to be able to lead others into the purposes of God.

A wise leader always encourages feedback from his subordinates and takes such with great concern and proper evaluation with appreciation. Such contribution can be most valuable in its substance and for substantial savings for all.

Blessed is the leader whose wisdom helps him to meditate the feud between moderate and hard liners without being affected by either side for he shall prosper along the way.

A wise leader would not violate the rules of just reasoning for selfish gain; otherwise, it would be an indictment against his intelligence.

CHALLENGE: THE PROPHET AT PRAYER

This is the prayer of A.W. Tozer – a man called to be witness to the nations. This is what he said to his Lord on the day of his ordination. After the elders and ministers had prayed and laid hands on him, he withdrew to meet his Saviour in the secret place and in silence, farther than his well-meaning brethren could take him.

And he said:

O Lord, I have heard Your voice and was afraid. You have called me to an awesome task in a grave and precious perilous hour. You are about to shake all nations and the earth and also heaven, that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

O Lord, my Lord, You have stooped to honour me to be Your servant. No man takes this honour upon himself except he that is called of God as was Aaron. You have ordained me Your messenger to them that are stubborn of heart and heard of hearing. They have rejected You, the Master, and it is not to be expected that they will receive me, the servant.

My God, I shall not waste time deploring my weakness nor my unfitness for the work. The responsibility is not mine, but Yours. You have said, I knew you- I ordained you – I sanctified you, and You have also said: you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatsoever I command you, you shall speak. Who am I to argue with You or to call into question Your sovereign choice? The decision is not mine, but Yours. So be it, Lord. Your will, not mine, be done.

Well do I know, O God of the prophets and the apostles, that as long as I honour You, You wilt honour me. Help me therefore to take this solemn vow to honour You in all my future life and labours. Whether by gain or by loss, by life or by death, and then to keep that vow unbroken while I live.

It is time, O God, for You to work, for the enemy has entered into Your pastures and the sheep are torn and scattered. And false shepherds abound who deny the danger and laugh at the perils which surround Your flock. The sheep are deceived by these hirelings and follow them with touching loyalty while the wolf closes in to kill and destroy. I beseech You, give me sharp eyes to detect the presence of the enemy; give me understanding to distinguish the false friend from the true. Give me vision to see and courage faithfully to report what I see. Make my voice so like Your own that even the sick sheep will recognise it and follow You.

Lord Jesus, I come to You for spiritual preparation; lay Your hand upon me. Anoint me with the oil of the New Testament prophet. Forbid that I should become a religious scribe and thus lose my prophetic calling. Save me from the curse that lies dark across the face of the modern clergy, the curse of compromise, of imitation, of professionalism. Save me from the error of judging a church by its size, its popularity or the amount of its yearly offerings.

Help me to remember that I am a prophet - not a promoter, not a religious manager, but a prophet! Let me never become a slave to crowds. Heal my soul of carnal ambitions and deliver me from the itch for publicity. Save me from bondage to things. Let me not waste my days puttering around the house. Lay Your terror upon me, O God, and drive me to the place of prayer where I may wrestle with principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world. Deliver me from over-eating and late sleeping. Teach me self-discipline that I may be a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

I accept hard work and small rewards in this life. I ask for no easy place. I shall try to be blind to the little ways that could make life easier. If others seek the smoother path, I shall try to take the hard way without judging them too harshly. I shall expect opposition and try to take it quietly when it comes. If, as sometimes it happens to Your servants, I should have grateful gifts pressed upon me by Your kind people, stand by me then and save me from the blight that often follows. Teach me to use whatever I receive in such manner that it will not injure my soul nor diminish my spiritual power.

And, if in Your permissive Providence, honor should come to me from Your Church, let me not forget in that hour that I am unworthy of the least of Your mercies, and that if men knew me as intimately as I know myself they would withhold their honours or bestow them upon others more worthy to receive them.

And now, O Lord of heaven and earth, I consecrate my remaining days to You; let them be many or few, as You will. Let me stand before the great or minister to the poor and lowly; that choice is not mine, and I would not influence it if I could. I am Your servant to do Your will. That will is sweeter to me than position or riches or fame, and I chose it above all things on earth or in heaven.

Though I am chosen of You and honoured by a high and holy calling, let me never forget that I am but a man of dust and ashes, a man with all the natural faults and passions that plague the race of men. I pray You, therefore, my Lord and Redeemer, save me from myself and from all the injuries I may do myself while trying to be a blessing to others.

Fill me, with Your power by the Holy Spirit, and I will go in Your strength and tell of Your I righteousness, even Yours alone. will spread abroad the message of redeeming love while my normal powers endure.

Then, dear Lord, when I am old and weary and too tired to go on, have a place ready for me above, and make me to be numbered with Your saints in glory everlasting. Amen.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF LEADERSHIP (1 SAMUEL 30:6)

Following are points on self-leadership on which some leaders spend up to 50% of their time to keep themselves charged and focussed. Even Jesus Himself often withdraw to re-charge and re-focus. A leader's battery should never be empty if he is to motivate and encourage his people. Remember: "Those who wait upon the Lord will renew and exchange their strength..." (Is. 40: 28-31).

Keep evaluating yourself, your growth and ministry in the light of the below given points:

Is my calling from God clear?

Ask yourself this question in order to evaluate where you stand! Own responsibility to find your calling and be assured of it.

Is my vision (for the future) clear?

Discuss vision with your leaders at least twice a year. You can only lead others when you are clear in your mind and know where you are going!

Is my passion / enthusiasm / excitement level really high?

(Compare with light bulbs: some have a capacity of: 25W, 60W, 100W, 150W – People will follow the charged up leader) Keep your own passion for God and your vision high!

Is my character completely submitted to Christ and is it clean? (Integrity issue!)

If you lose character / integrity, you will lose leadership. Keep your word; be truthful.

Is my pride subdued? 1 Peter 5:5. God gives only grace to the humble. Do I know my place and dependency upon the Lord?

Am I controlled by my fears? Fear of failure, fear of change.

Are my psychological or emotional wounds hindering my leadership?

Scars from childhood, etc. which will hinder to trust / release others.

Are my ears open to the whisper of the Holy Spirit?

Leadership is really working in the Spirit. Jas. 1:5-8. Learn to seek God's wisdom.

Is my pace / schedule sustainable? Can I continue to live and minister at the speed / level and intensity at which I'm doing things now?

Don't over-commit, over-schedule yourself. Never allow the pace at which you are doing the work of God to destroy God's work in you!

Are my spiritual gifts and talents progressing?

Know your spiritual gifts and talents and be good steward of them. Matthew 25 – Identify your gifts and talents, use and develop them to its zenith / be the best at it!

Is my heart for God getting bigger? Do I grow in knowing and loving God?

Is your capacity for loving people increasing?

Love is the supreme value in the Kingdom, and should also be in our lives. God's treasure is people. Take care of God's treasure!

Assignment: Please identify and write down prayerfully the three foremost gifts / talents / ministries for which you believe God has called, appointed and anointed you.

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES OF PAUL (Based on Second Corinthians)

Every leader can use this list to discern how he measures up to Paul, the pattern leader. We encourage every leader to expand each one of these points for his own understanding and ministry. By the guidance of these leadership principles, leaders should:

- Serve in the place to which God has called them (II Cor. 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Acts 13:2).
- Comfort those in trouble with the same comfort they have received from the Lord. (II Cor.1: 4 – 6).
- Be dependent upon prayer (1:11).
- Be people of integrity in their dealings with the world and in their dealings with the Church (1:12; Acts 6:3; I Timothy 3:7).
- Have the interest of others at heart (1:13-23 and 7:12).
- Be anointed by the Spirit (1:21-22).
- Not be interested in having dominion over other believers (1:24; Luke 22:24-27).
- Work the principle of forgiveness, so Satan cannot acquire a foothold among the people of the Lord (2:10-11).
- Be triumphant in Christ (2:14).
- Be a sweet savour (good fragrance) unto the Lord (2:15).
- Find their sufficiency in God (3:5).
- Remember that they are made into able ministers by the Lord Himself (3:6).
- Use plain (open, bold, confident, outspoken, free, blunt) speech.
- Be personally experiencing change from glory to glory (3:18).
- Show forth the glory of the Lord (4:1-2) by doing these things:
 - Renounce hidden and shameful things;
 - Not walk in craftiness;
 - Not adulterate the Word of God;
 - Manifest forth the truth in their lives;
 - Command themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
- Minister the Word by the power of God and not by the strength of man (4:7; I Cor. 2:1-5).
- Realize that the glory is in earthen (human) vessels (4:7).
- Encounter affliction, but not be crushed by it (4:8).
- Be in perplexity, but despair not (4:8).
- Encounter persecution, but never feel forsaken (4:8).
- Be cast down with discouragement, but not destroyed it (4:9; II Timothy 2:3-4; Psalm 116:10).
- Be determined to fulfill their charge before the Lord (4:1, 10).
- Cause men to relate to Christ and not to themselves (4:5).
- Have a vision for the things of the Lord (5:7-9).
- Have a motivation acceptable to the Lord (5:9).
- Remember that they will be judged for their actions both now and in the future judgement (5:10).
- Conduct their lives so the people of the Lord can be encouraged (5:11-13).
- Be motivated by the love of God to lay down their lives for the sheep (5:14).
- See the people of God as the Lord sees them (5:16- 17).
- Have a ministry of reconciliation (5:18).
- Be representatives for the Lord in an obvious way (5:20).
- Give no offense in any way, so that the ministry will be corrupted or blamed (6:1-3).
- Prove their ministries (6:4-5) by exhibiting patience in the midst of great trials:
 - Afflictions
 - Necessities
 - Distresses
 - Stripes
 - Imprisonments

Tumults
Labors
Watchings
Fasting

Prove their ministries (6:6-8) with the qualities of presence of:

Pureness
Knowledge
Long-suffering
Kindness
The Holy Ghost
Love unfeigned
The word of truth
The power of God
The armor of righteousness
Honor above dishonor
Evil report overcome by good report

Prove their ministries (6:8-10) by enduring as:

Deceivers yet true
Unknown yet well known
Dying yet living
Chastened yet not killed
Sorrowful yet always rejoicing
Poor yet making many rich
Having nothing yet possessing all things

Speak openly to those they minister to and enlarge their hearts unto them (6:11).

Cleanse themselves in flesh and in spirit in the fear of God to perfect holiness (II Cor. 7:1).

Be honest and truthful so that accusers will have nothing to say (7:2).

Do not condemn, but edify the people of the Lord, through the channels of relationship and love (7:3).

Give themselves to and for the people (7:3).

Experience what the people experience (7:3).

Be open to the people of God (7:2-4).

Be free to share experience back and forth with the people of God (7:2-4).

Support (comfort) the people of God, and receive the same in return (7:5-7).

Esteem themselves as lowly persons (7:6).

Be comforted with the fruit of their labor, which is the positive response of the people to their instructions and reproof (7:5-7).

Chasten the flock as a father, bringing them to godly sorrow, and not worldly sorrow, correction in love brings life, but correction in any other manner bring death (7:8-13).

Work godly sorrow into the people by loving rebukes (7:11), which brings:

Carefulness in the sheep's walk
Clearing of self (repentance unto good works)
Indignation towards evil
The fear of God
Vehement desire for God
Zeal for God
Comfort to the leaders

Reveal their care and concerns for the flock, even if they have to show it to them by rebuke (7:12).

Exhort the sheep to do good works even when they notice them already doing good works (7:13).

Remember that when they reveal truth to the Body, the Body will reveal that truth to others (7:14).

Be open to comforting by the people as well as by God (7:6, 13).
 Have confidence in the sheep, as well as confidence in themselves, but trusting mainly in God. (7:16).
 Have perseverance in trials with joy (8:2).
 Be willing to sacrifice (8:4).
 Be willing to “let go and let God” (8:6).
 Exhort in love and diligence (8:7).
 Be willing to serve, and be able to put that into the action of brotherly love (8:9).
 Include mutual helpfulness (8:14).
 Be able to give wise counsel (8:14).
 Look to God as the source of their supply, though God may use many different instruments to meet needs (8:15).
 Be thankful (8:16).
 Be zealous for the Lord (8:17).
 Have integrity and blamelessness (8:20).
 Be honest in the sight of God and man (8:21).
 Be good messengers (8:23).
 Realize that they are not alone, but also have fathers in the faith (8:23).
 Challenge the people to demonstrate their faith and ministry (8:24).
 Have hearts that are birthed in love (8:24).
 Often use repetition in teaching the people of the Lord (9:1).
 Encourage a positive focus in the people of the Lord (9:2).
 Sometimes remind people of their own words (9:3-4).
 Collect money regularly before it is coveted by the givers (9:5).
 Receive from the Lord (9:6-11).
 Remind the people that giving blesses both the receiver and the giver (9:13).
 Teach the people that giving is comparable to praising God in spiritual sacrifices (9:12).
 Boast of the good in their people so that the people will try and live up to it. (9:13-14).
 Move in the boldness of the Spirit and not in the boldness of the flesh (which manifests itself in elevating the leader above the people) (10:2-3).
 Look on the inward root of rebellion and disobedience and not focus on outward appearances (10:5-7).
 Exercise authority for the edification of the flock, and not for its destruction (10:8).
 Live what they speak, and not compare themselves with others (10:12).
 Operate with what the Lord has given them, and not try to impress the people with religious jargon (10:13- 14).
 Bring those who are under them to perfection, as they themselves grow in the Lord (10:15- 16).
 Boast only in what the Lord has given them, and not boast in the knowledge of their own hearts (10:17- 18).
 Always protect those under their care, and not flee from trouble, as the hireling does (11:1-3).
 Always demonstrate a servant spirit and not be a burden to those to whom they minister (11:5 – 9).
 Provide their own needs when necessary, and not expect the people always to do so (11:7 – 9).
 Warn the flock against false ministries, and be alert to the ways of the adversary (11:12-15).
 Always be motivated by the love of the Lord (11:11).
 Boast only in their infirmities and in their weaknesses and not make themselves greater than other ministries (11:21-22, 30-33 and 12:5).
 Suffer hardships in life along with persecution often times more than other people (11:23-29).
 Always bear the responsibilities of their position, and not delegate them just to get out of the job (11:28-29).
 Keep a clear conscience before the Lord (11:31).
 Remain humble in time of great revelation (12:1-4).
 Understand God’s purpose in His dealings in their lives (12:5-7).

Remember that they are given grace in their weaknesses (12:8-9).
Be content in their weaknesses (12:10).
Recognize God's strength in their weaknesses (12:9).
See their limitations, yet see themselves as God sees them (12:11).
Not think too highly of themselves, or have false humility (12:11).
Learn to admit when they are wrong (12:13).
Live a life of sacrifice for the sheep (12:14).
Give without expecting return (12:15).
Walk uprightly before the Lord and His people (12:18).
Not feel defensive concerning the call of God upon their lives (12:19).
Be able to mourn over the sin of the people (12:21).
Have the confirmation of two or three witnesses in the things that they say (13:1).
Exercise spiritual authority and maintain church discipline (13:2).
Have in them the power of God (13:4).
Examine themselves in the sight of the Lord (13:5).
Know their position in the Lord (13:6).
Shun evil (13:7).
Not be selfish, but have pure love for the Body of Christ (13:9).
Build up the Body that will produce love, comfort, peace and unity (13:11).

INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP FROM PAUL – Different kinds of qualifications

"Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect....He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited....He must also have a good reputation with outsiders." 1 Timothy 3:2-7.

A friend once said to me, "Isn't it humbling to see your own faults running around on two little legs!" The comment reminded me of how much clearer are spiritual principles when we see them "running around," instead of merely stating them in the abstract. The apostle Paul embodied principles of leadership that he also described in his letters. Looking at his life, we can see leadership all the more clearly.

The reputation of a great leader grows with the years. Surely Paul's moral and spiritual greatness is all the more evident the more he is studied and analyzed. It is sheer irony and a miracle that God would select one of the most aggressive opponents of the early Christian movement and make him into its most outstanding leader. Paul was uniquely equipped for the major role to which God called him. Paul was certainly one of the most versatile leaders the church has known. His versatility is apparent in the ease with which he adapted to various audiences. Paul could address statesmen and soldiers, adults and children, kings and royal officials. He was at ease in debate with philosophers, theologians, and pagan idol worshipers. Paul had a brilliant grasp of the Old Testament. He studied under the influential rabbi Gamaliel, and as a student Paul was second to none. His own testimony records: "I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Galatians 1:14).

A natural leader by any measure, Paul became a great spiritual leader when his heart and mind were captured by Jesus Christ. Paul had boundless, Christ-centered ambition. His supreme love for Christ coupled with the obligation to share Christ's message were his powerful life-time motives (Romans 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:14). His authentic missionary passion helped him leap over all cultural and racial barriers. All people were his concern. A person's wealth or poverty, social status or intellect had not bearing on Paul's concern for him. In addition to his own schooling and experiences, Paul enjoyed the illumination and inspiration for the Holy Spirit. The qualities of leadership Paul taught are as relevant now as during the first century A.D. We dare not toss them off as antiquated or carelessly regard them as mere options. The selection from 1 Timothy quoted at the head of this study spells out qualifications for spiritual leadership. Let us look at it again, and consider its parts.

SOCIAL QUALIFICATIONS

With respect to relationships within the church, the leader is to be above reproach. If a charge is preferred against him, it would fail, because his life would afford no grounds for reproach or indictment of wrongdoing. His adversary finds no opening for a smear campaign, rumor mongering, or gossip.

With respect to relationships outside the church, the spiritual leader is to enjoy a good reputation. An elder known to the author was a businessman who often took preaching appointments on the Lord's Day. His employees used to say that they could tell when he had preaching on Sunday because of his ill-temper on Monday. Those outside the church can see plainly when our lives fall short of our testimony. We cannot hope to lead people to Christ by living an example of such contradiction.

Outsiders will criticize; nonetheless, they respect the high ideals of Christian character. When a Christian leader full of high ideals lives a holy and joyful life in front of unbelievers, they will want to cultivate a similar experience. The character of the elder should command the respect of the unbeliever, inspire his confidence, and arouse his aspiration. Example is much more potent than precept.

MORAL QUALIFICATIONS

Moral principles common to the Christian life are under constant, subtle attack, and none more so than sexual faithfulness. The Christian leader must be blameless on this vital and often unpopular point. Faithfulness to one marriage partner is the Biblical norm. The spiritual leader should be a man of unchallengeable morality.

The spiritual leader must be temperate, not addicted to alcohol. To be drunk is to show a disorderly personal life. Drunkenness is a disgrace anywhere, and much more so when it captures a Christian. A leader cannot allow a secret indulgence that would undermine public witness.

MENTAL QUALIFICATIONS

A leader must be prudent, a person with sound judgment. This principle describes “the well-balanced state of mind resulting from habitual self-restraint” – the inner character that comes from daily self-discipline. Some called this quality “reason’s girdle and passion’s bridle.” The ancient Greeks, who valued this quality, described it as a disciplined mind not swayed by sudden impulse or flying to extremes. For example, courage to the Greeks was the “golden mean” between rashness and timidity; purity was the mean between prudery and immorality. In a similar way, the Christian leader who possesses a sound mind has control of every part of his personality, habits, and passions.

As to behavior, the leader must be respectable. A well-ordered life is the fruit of a well-ordered mind. The life of the leader should reflect the beauty and orderliness of God.

Then the leader must be ready and able to teach. In a leader, watch for this desire, this spark. It creates opportunities to help others understand the meaning of spiritual life. The leader feels the joy of the Spirit and wants others to know God as well. Moreover, the leader's responsibility for teaching those under him should be supported by a blameless life.

Teaching is hard work, and doing it well takes time, preparation, study, and prayer. As someone lamented: "Oh, for teachers among us; leaders who know how to read hearts and apply truth to the needs of the people, as a good physician reads patients and applies remedies to their ills. There are soul-sicknesses open and obscure, acute and chronic, superficial and deep-seated which the truth in Jesus will heal. But it is not the same truth for each need, any more than the same medicine for every disease. That is why we should most diligently study the Bible and pray for the constant and powerful illumination of the Spirit."

John Wesley had these gifts. He never indulged in a cheap disparagement of the intellect and was always trying to promote knowledge of the Scriptures and spiritual renewal among the people. He was intellectually gifted and possessed an impressive command of English literature. An eminent preacher declared that he knew of no sermons that gave greater evidence of an intimate knowledge of classical and general literature than those of Wesley. Yet he was widely known as a person, “of one Book.” That kind of breadth, focussed on the Scriptures, is a high example of the consecrated intellect of the spiritual leader.

PERSONALITY QUALIFICATIONS

If you would rather pick a fight than solve a problem, do not consider leading the church. The Christian leader must be genial and gentle, not a lover of controversy. The leader should be one who corrects and “redresses the injustices of justice.” Aristotle taught that the leader should be one who “remembers good rather than evil, the good one has received rather than the good one has done.” The leader must be actively considerate, not merely passive and certainly not withdrawn, but irenic in disposition, always seeking a peaceful solution, and able to diffuse an explosive situation.

Then the leader must show hospitality. The ministry should never be seen as an irksome imposition, but rather as one that offers the privilege of service. Or as some have put it: “that a bishop must be hospitable, a man who gladly and at all times welcomes into his house the servants of God.”

When Paul wrote his letter to Timothy, inns were few, dirty, and known for their immoral atmosphere. Visiting Christians depended on open doors of hospitality.

Covetousness and its twin, the love of money, disqualify a person for leadership. Financial reward cannot enter a leader's mind in the exercise of ministry. The leader must be as willing to accept an appointment with a lower remuneration as one with a higher.

DOMESTIC QUALIFICATIONS

The Christian leader who is married must demonstrate the ability to, "manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect." (1 Timothy 3:4). We cannot accept the picture of a stern, unsmiling patriarch, immune to laughter and impervious to emotion. But Paul urges a well-ordered home where mutual respect and supportive harmony are the keynotes. Failure to keep home in order has kept many ministers and missionaries from their fullest potential.

To reach this goal, a spouse must fully share the leader's spiritual aspirations and be willing to join in the necessary sacrifices. Many a gifted leader has been lost to high office and spiritual effectiveness because of an uncooperative spouse. Without a benevolent and happy discipline in one's home, can a Christian worker be expected to manage a ministry? Can hospitality be offered if children carry on without restraint? Can a ministry to other families be effective if one's own family is in disarray?

MATURITY

Spiritual maturity is indispensable to good leadership. A novice or new believer should not be pushed into leadership. A plant needs time to take root and come to maturity, and the process cannot be hurried. The seed must take root downward before it can bear fruit upward. Novices usually have "an abundance of vegetation" and are "not yet pruned by the cross." In 1 Timothy 3:10, referring to qualifications for deacon, Paul urges, "They must first be tested."

The church in Ephesus was a decade old when Timothy became its pastor. This Church had in it a galaxy of gifted teachers, so there were many men of mature experience in it; hence Paul's insistence that the new minister be mature – not as old as the others, but as spiritually rooted and fruitful. Paul did not insist on maturity as a qualification to lead the newly established church at Crete (Titus 1:5-9), where mature members were not yet present. In the early stages of building a church, we cannot insist on maturity, but every care must be taken that those developing the work be stable in character, spiritual in outlook, and not ambitious for position.

Paul warns that a person not ready for leadership, and thrust into the role, "may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil." (1 Timothy 3:6). A new believer does not yet possess the spiritual stability essential to leading people wisely. It is unwise to give key positions too early even to those who manifest promising talent, lest it spoil them. The story of the church and its mission is filled with examples of failed leaders who were appointed too soon. A novice suddenly placed in authority over others faces the danger of inflated ego. Instead, the promising believer should be given a widening opportunity to serve at humbler and less prominent tasks that will develop both natural and spiritual gifts. He should not be advanced too fast, lest he become puffed up. Neither should he be repressed, lest he be discouraged.

Paul did not appoint elders in every place on his first missionary journey. He sometimes waited until a later visit when questions about spiritual development were satisfied (Acts 14:23). Timothy got saved during Paul's first journey, but not ordained until the second journey.

Maturity is shown in a magnanimous spirit and broad vision. Paul's encounter with Christ transformed him from a narrow-minded bigot into a full-hearted leader. The indwelling Christ enlarged his passion for others, broadened his view of the world, and deepened his convictions.

The importance of the above requirements for leadership in the Christian church are recognized even in secular circles. An unbeliever described the ideal field commander: "He must be prudently self-controlled, sober, frugal, enduring in toil, intelligent, without love of money, neither young nor old, if possible the father of a family, able to speak competently and of good reputation." If the world demands such standards of its leaders, the Church of the living God should select its leaders with even greater care.

POST-SCRIPT

To take responsibility willingly is the mark of a leader. Joshua was such a person. He did not hesitate to follow one of the greatest leaders of all history, Moses. Joshua had more reason than Moses to plead inadequacy, but Joshua did not repeat Moses' sin. Instead, he promptly accepted the task he was given and set about the work. When Elijah was taken up, Elisha did not flinch at stepping in. He accepted the authority conferred by the falling mantle and become a leader in his own right. In each case these leaders were assured of their divine calling. Once that issue is settled, no one need hesitate to do what God has set before.

A renowned bishop lived in a different era, but his rules for life carry relevance today:

Eagerly start the day's main work after completing prayer and Bible study.

Do not murmur at your busyness or the shortness of time, but buy up the time all around.

Never murmur when correspondence is brought in.

Never exaggerate duties by seeming to suffer under the load, but treat all responsibilities as liberty and gladness.

Never call attention to crowded work or trivial experience.

Before confrontation or censure, obtain from God a real love for the one at fault. Know the facts; be generous in your judgement. Otherwise, how ineffective, how unintelligible or perhaps provocative your well-intentioned censure may be.

Do not believe everything you hear; do not spread gossip.

Do not seek praise, gratitude, respect, or regard for past service.

Avoid complaining when your advice or opinion is not consulted, or having been consulted, set aside.

Never allow yourself to be placed in favourable contrast with anyone.

Do not press conversation to your own needs and concerns.

Seek no favors, not sympathies; do not ask for tenderness, but receive what comes.

Bear the blame; do not share or transfer it.

Give thanks to God when credit for your own work or ideas is given to another.

UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

CHAPTER ONE - Kingdom Authority

We have come to the time of the greatest conflict between light and darkness that the earth has ever witnessed. It is the conflict of the ages. This is not a time to fear. We stand under the banner which has already won. The cross is the power of God, and His power is about to be revealed as never before on this earth. It is the time to take our stand with the absolute commitment to never retreat before the enemies of the cross. The cross of Jesus Christ will prevail against all of its enemies, and we are coming to the time when it will be made manifest.

The Lord said that, “the harvest is the end of the age” (Matthew 13:39). This harvest is the reaping of everything that has been sown, both the good and the evil. The most glorious and powerful, church will soon confront the deepest darkness. Cult (different kinds of religious groups and teachings) and New Age (a form of Hinduism mixed with other religions) powers are increasing dramatically, but the Lord has not left His people without power to face this evil onslaught. “When the enemy shall come, in like a flood the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19). As cultic supernatural power has been growing, the supernatural power given to the church is increasing even more! Cults have begun receiving supernatural revelation about Christian leaders in order to begin systematic attacks on them. The Lord has begun rising up prophets to discern the enemy’s schemes so that the church can start to ambush him before he tries to implement his evil strategy. This is happening with more frequency and gives those who are open to this ministry a significant advantage in the battle.

We do not have to keep getting blind-sided by the enemy. The Lord is raising up an army on the offensive, that will attack the strongholds of the enemy with weapons that are divinely powerful. We must not cower before the New Age and other cults, but see them as harvest fields! However, as we proceed toward the conclusion of this age, the conflict between the light and darkness will become more supernatural. The day of supernatural neutrality is over. If we do not know the true power of God’s Spirit we will become increasingly subject to the power of the evil one. Those whose fears or doctrines have led them to avoid even the supernatural power of God will find themselves, and their children, easy prey to evil supernatural power. We must recognize the nature of the battle that we are in, and fight so as to win. We have come to the time when Satan and his hosts are being cast out of heaven and are coming down to the earth with great wrath. They will not fight fair and they will not fight on human terms – they will fight with every bit of power they have. The church must be equipped with every bit of power that the Lord intended for us to have in order to effectively fight this battle.

Men were Created to Walk in the Supernatural

Men were created to have fellowship with God who is Spirit. Those who worship Him can only worship Him in Spirit and truth. Because the purpose of man’s creation is to have fellowship with God who is Spirit, and to worship (serve) Him in Spirit, there exists within him a void which draws him to the spiritual and supernatural. If this is not fulfilled by the Spirit of truth, we will be deceived by the spirit of error. The spiritual vacuum in man will be filled. As someone declared, “If you deny a man food, he will gobble poison.” If we deny men the right supernatural relationship with God they will succumb to the oppression or seductions of evil supernatural power.

The Test

God does not tempt men, but He does test them. These tests are for the purpose of promotion. Just as you had to pass tests to prove that you were qualified to advance to the next level in school, there are tests allowed by God in our lives so that He can trust us with more spiritual authority. Tests are not for the Lord. He already knows what is in our heart. They are for us. The tests are not just for the purpose of revealing to us what is in our hearts, but for changing our hearts. The tests mold us

into vessels that are fit for the Master's use. A primary test which everyone called to walk in true spiritual authority must pass is the rejection test.

The rejection test must have been the most difficult task for the Lord Himself to endure. Not only did He endure the desertion of almost all of His disciples when He needed them the most, but He also had to endure being forsaken by the Father as He took on the sin of the world. The One who was called to the highest position of authority had to pass the most difficult rejection test. This is because **authority is basically about how we will relate to other people, and the Lord, when we have been given power and influence.** This test will separate those who remain true because their heart is true, from those who only remain obedient for as long as it is politically expedient. The more spiritual authority that we are called to walk in, the greater this test will usually be in our life. All authority, power and dominion have been given to Jesus because He was completely obedient. We will be trusted with authority, power and dominion to the degree that we are obedient. The true ministry of Jesus is a power ministry. He "began to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). We are called to be like Him and to do the works that He did. We must have power to do this. To be entrusted with this power we must be proven faithful. We must love the truth more than we love human approval or recognition. We must love it even more than we love our own lives. There can be a corrupting force in power. It is often said that, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." There is truth to this, which is why we must be tested so thoroughly, before we will be trusted with real power.

There is at this time also a great release of counterfeit power in the New Age and other cults. They emphasize supernatural experiences which are demonic in origin, that are the counterparts similar Biblical experiences. They mimic the power that men and women of God are called to walk in. Of course, the only reason why there is counterfeit money is because there is real money. Satan is using this for his own reasons, but the Lord is allowing it to test those who must walk in more power to accomplish His last day ministry. Such an increase of the demonic activity exists because there is an increase of the real. This is intended to confuse the church so that she will reject the real gifts and experiences. Satan knows very well the impact that these gifts will have in helping the church to accomplish God's purpose in this last hour. Satan is attempting through this demonic activity to seduce Christians who are called to walk in supernatural power, but who are often rejected or misunderstood by the church and do not know or understand the power ministry of the Holy Spirit. Those who do not do well with the rejection test will always be vulnerable to seduction from the enemy.

Rejection comes to every man and woman of God. He allows it to come upon His ministers so that they can more fully identify with Him. The most noble and pure Man who ever walked the earth was constantly rejected, scorned, lied about, and ultimately even betrayed, denied and abandoned by His own best friends. As He explained, disciples are not above their master; if it happened to Him it will also happen to us. But this is our opportunity! It is through the greatest injustices that the greatest love can be demonstrated. How many of us, if we knew that the next day all of our best friends were going to deny that they even knew us, would care to spend a last evening with them? He even washed their feet. Jesus loved His own regardless of their behavior. He was faithful even when they were not. There is no greater opportunity for us to grow in the true love of God than when we are rejected or abused. Jesus asked the Father to forgive even those who crucified Him. Stephen asked the same forgiveness for those who were stoning him.

God is love and those who minister in His Spirit will minister in love. The greater the love, the greater the power with which we can be entrusted. God allows rejection in our lives to help separate us from our own evil motive and to give us opportunities to grow in His love. If we feel rejected when people reject us it only reveals that we are not yet dead to this world – it is impossible for a dead man to feel rejection! (He will feel no "pin-pricks!") Rejection accompanies with true ministry and rejection is one of our greatest opportunities to operate in true ministry, which is to demonstrate the true love of God. To be able to handle rejection without being offended is one of the great demonstrations of spiritual maturity, which is simply Christ likeness.

Many who were called as true prophets of God have been seduced by the enemy, because they refused the protection and covering of the rest of the body of Christ. These have often refused the

covering of the Church because the leadership of the Church misunderstood and sometimes rejected them. Again, the Lord allows this misunderstanding because learning to deal properly with rejection and authority is essential for anyone who is going to carry the awesome power and responsibility of having supernatural knowledge or revelation. Most of what is called “discernment” in the Church today is really suspicion, often motivated by jealousy or territorial preservation. This is the reason why so many good and true ministries are being attacked by other Christians. Anything but love will distort our discernment, which is why Paul explained to the Philippians that, “your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment” (Philippians 1:9).

God is love, and if we are going to speak for Him we must also abide in His love. His love is sometimes severe; sometimes it is His love that brings discipline, but it is still love. Even God’s judgment is a manifestation of His love. We only have true spiritual authority in areas where He has given us His love. Only when we are ministering from a foundation of His love will our ministry be true.

Romans 11:29 states: “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance”. The Lord is faithful even when we are unfaithful. When the Lord gives a gift He will not take it back, even if we become unfaithful or misuse it. This is why men who may have gifts of healings or miracles can fall into sin or corruption but the gifts will still work. The same is true of the prophetic gifts of the Spirit. Because of this it is crucial that we not judge a ministry by the gift, but by the fruit. Those who move in the power and revelatory gifts who are affected by rejection or rebellion can use the gifts of God to bring division and damage to the very work of God. This is a dynamic which may be hard to understand, but is required because of the faithfulness of the Lord.

Under the Old Covenant a priest was not allowed to minister if he had scabs (see Leviticus 21:20). A scab is an unhealed wound. No one could touch a person with scabs. The same is true of us; when we have unhealed spiritual wounds others cannot get close to us and we cannot function in our true priestly ministry. Most of us have witnessed those who preach, prophesy or ministry out of their own rejection, bitterness or other unhealed wounds – it is a corruption of their ministry. Until we can handle rejection and other injustices without being wounded, we are not ready for the spiritual priesthood that is the foundation of all true ministry.

The Foundation of Spiritual Authority

Paul explained to Timothy: “The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Timothy 1:5). Paul exhorted the Corinthians to, “earnestly desire spiritual gifts” (I Corinthians 14:1), but he never exhorted them to make gifts their ultimate goal. We need the gifts and the power of the Spirit, and the church needs them much more than she presently knows. Even so, we need them for the sake of ministering to hurting people, not just to establish our ministries or to have big conferences. When we lose sight of the goal, which is love, a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith, we have lost our way.

All of the gifts of the Spirit operate by faith, including prophecy, and faith works through love (see Galatians 5:6). True faith is not just the confidence that God CAN do certain things, it is knowing WHY He wants to do them. Fear is the counter to faith, but “there is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). Love casts out everything that hinders the move of God through us, and to us. Love is the foundation upon which spiritual authority, and, thereby, the gifts of the Spirit, operates. It is vain to seek the gifts until they have a foundation upon which to be built. The strength of the foundation determines the level of power with which we can be trusted.

The Gifts are God’s Love

It has become a popular saying that we should not seek the gifts, but the Giver. This sounds noble, but it is contrary to the Word of God which exhorts us to “pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts” (I Corinthians 14:1). The gifts of the Spirit and love are not mutually exclusive. We should pursue love and the fruit of the Spirit first, but that does not mean that we should not pursue the gifts as well – we should pursue both.

He expresses His love to us through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We should “desire earnestly” the gifts, and do it because we love. Jesus healed the sick because He loved them and did not want them to suffer needlessly. He gave words of knowledge because He loved the people and wanted to impact them with the reality that God really did know them. The gifts of the Spirit enabled Jesus to do something, not just feel something, with His love. The Lord gave the gifts to the church so that we could be extensions of His love and desire to minister to needy people. Jesus worked some of His great miracles in obscurity, and then He would even tell those healed not to tell anyone, but to go to the temple and offer thanksgiving to God. Jesus did not use the gifts of the Spirit just for impressing people, but for loving them and touching them in their place of need.

If Jesus had just wanted to impress people with the power of God, He could have given the Jews a sign from heaven just as they asked. In asking for a sign from heaven, the Jews were not just asking for another miracle, but they were asking Him to do something in the sky, to stop the sun like Joshua did, or make the shadow reverse as Isaiah did. The Lord could have easily done that, and He could do it today if He wanted just to impress people with His power. Impressing people with His power is not the primary reason for the gifts of the Spirit – love for people is the reason for them.

Satan tempted Jesus by trying to get Him to use the power of God for selfish reasons, or to testify of who He was. The truth is that the power He was given was meant to testify of who He was, but it was crucial that He not try to do that Himself, but that He let the Father do it. Jesus was focused entirely on glorifying the Father, and the Father was focused entirely on glorifying His Son – neither was trying to glorify Himself.

The Lord does use His supernatural power to verify His Word and those He has sent, but we must trust Him to do that. Whenever we seek the gifts in order to testify of our own ministries, we are in the process of falling from grace. We must utterly devote ourselves to testifying of Jesus and making His name great, and leave the confirming of our ministries entirely to Him.

Many seek after a miracle because they know how that miracles will impact unbelieving relatives or friends. It is true that some miracles will impact unbelievers, but most will not be impressed, regardless of how spectacular they are. Even after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead the Jews just sought even more to kill Him. When unbelievers are impacted by miracles it is a wonderful bonus, but we will miss the point if we are seeking miracles or power ministry just to impress people. I have rarely seen the Lord do a great miracle when that was the primary motive.

True Maturity Is Love

We are tested through rejection and misunderstanding so that we can overcome rejection. If we are to accomplish the purposes of God, we must come to the level of maturity where, “the love of Christ controls us” (II Corinthians 5:14). Love has not taken into account the wrongs suffered and is not motivated by rejection, which drives us either to retaliation or to try to prove ourselves.

Spiritual gifts which are not motivated by love are, “a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (I Corinthians 13:1). Gifts of the Spirit which are not grounded in love are usually noisy. These will come with fanfare and hype, founded upon self-promotion. A noisy gong or clanging cymbal will also make the real trumpet more difficult to hear. But one who is controlled by the love of Christ will be consumed by the one desire to see Him glorified and worshipped.

True love is tolerant and patient. There is certainly a place for calling the church to maturity and to the obedience of Christ. This is basic function of the prophetic ministry, but it must be done in love and not in impatience or intolerance. We occasionally need to look at where we ourselves were just five, ten or fifteen years ago. Are we being impatient with those who are at the same levels that we were then? Are we giving less grace to people than the Lord gave to us?

Much of the Church is immature because it is supposed to be immature! A two year old child is immature and is supposed to be. It is perfectly acceptable for a two year old to wear diapers. Now if a fifteen year old is still having to wear them we have a problem. My two year old shouldn't try to do the things that my seven year old son can do; expecting such maturity from him would only frustrate him, and could actually hinder his development. I want him to be disciplined, and mature for his age level, but I must not require more than that from him. We must have the same patience

with the church. We must discern where people are and call them to the proper discipline and maturity commensurate with it.

Every ministry that is working for the equipping of the church must be careful not put to personal expectations on the church, but to seek the Lord for His expectations. Ministers who have been through previous rejections, without being healed of them, often take their next assignment with a determination to prove themselves. This will cause them to put unrealistic pressures on themselves and those within their flock, which only leads to more failures. This can be a vicious cycle that leaves a long line of hurt people and a ministry that is either too bitter or too insecure to function. Again, when we know that we have received our commission from above, and that we are known by the Father, it really does not matter what other men think of us. This is a liberation that is essential for any minister. We cannot function in true ministry if we are carrying any other yoke but the Lord's. We must not allow ourselves to be controlled by human expectations, even our own expectations, but only by the Lord's. He does not expect of us what He does not empower us to perform.

Jesus experienced the greatest rejection the world has ever known or will know. He was rejected by the world that He Himself had made. He came in love, healing and delivering the oppressed, and He never once committed a sin. Yet, He suffered the most cruel and humiliating death, and He suffered it for the very ones who killed Him. He turned the greatest evil and the greatest injustice the world had ever known into the opportunity to forgive and save the very ones who persecuted Him. The Lord commanded those who followed Him to do the same thing – we must take up our crosses every day just as He did. If we do that we have the power to overcome evil with good. Every evil that is done has the counterbalancing power to be used for good that will deliver men from the evil that is in them. As ministers of the gospel we are meant to be rejected, but we must turn each rejection into an opportunity to show the love of God.

Authority for Healing

It is by the Lord's stripes that we are healed. The same principle is true for us as well. In the very place where we are wounded we can receive authority for healing. If we have been abused we will receive authority for healing others who are abused once we are healed. Even when we are healed we will remain sensitive in that area. This sensitivity becomes discernment so that we will quickly recognize others who have suffered as we have. This sensitivity also enables us to minister in the compassion that is required for true ministry.

It is for this reason that the Lord allowed every wound that we have suffered in our lives – so that He could give us authority for healing in those same areas. That is why Paul pointed to his wounds and tribulations when his authority was questioned. Don't waste your trials! They really are most precious than gold. What value could ever be placed upon a single healing? There is a point at which men reject the love and mercy of the Lord to the degree that they become incorrigible – meaning they are beyond help. This happened to Judas. At this point, God's mercy is replaced with judgment. But we must understand that “mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13).

The Lord's patience with men usually greatly exceeds what we are willing to endure before pronouncing judgment. Just as almost any parent is going to be far more patient with his own children than he will with others, the Lord is usually far more patient with men because they are His children. He sent His own Son to be tortured and killed for them because He loves them. If the Son of God could suffer the cruelty and injustice that He did for our sakes, how much more should we be willing to suffer for the sake of extending His great salvation?

CHAPTER TWO - Counterfeit Spiritual Authority

Overcoming witchcraft is one of the primary battles that almost everyone called to the ministry must face. Many are not even aware of this power that is almost certainly arrayed against them, and therefore they suffer many needless wounds from it. One of the important Biblical

personifications of this battle is found in the struggle between Elijah and Jezebel – the quintessential prophet versus the ultimate witch. This battle is so crucial to those called to the ministry that its outcome will determine whether or not they will fulfill their calling. Even Elijah suffered such a setback in his battle with Jezebel that he had to pass his mantle on to another, and Elisha had to later fulfill many of the commissions that God had given to Elijah. He still accomplished a great deal and was one of the greatest prophets who ever lived, receiving the extraordinary honor of being carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. However, he did not accomplish all that had been given him to do. Regardless of how much we have done, the spirit of Jezebel will come against us to keep us from completing our mission.

We do not want to unnecessarily lift up the enemy, and it is not Biblical for us to fear the enemy, but we must know and understand his schemes or we will likely be foiled by them. The spirit of Jezebel is one of his most powerful weapons against anyone who walks in spiritual authority, and if we do not respect that power, it will hit us very hard at a most inappropriate time. Right after Elijah's greatest victory, after fearlessly confronting and then slaying hundreds of false prophets, this one woman, Jezebel, declares that she is going to get him and Elijah flees for his life. He then comes under such depression that he does not even want to live. Those who under-estimate the power of the Jezebel spirit are in for a terrible shock, and probably a terrible defeat. I have personally witnessed many churches destroyed, and many great men of God undone by this terrible guile.

Witchcraft has dramatically increased throughout the world in recent years. One of the expressed goals of this movement is to dilute, subjugate and destroy Biblical Christianity. Many Christians are presently suffering attacks in some form from those who practice witchcraft. Discerning the nature of these attacks and knowing how to overcome them is becoming important for all believers, not just prophets. But prophets will unquestionably be on the forefront of this battle just as Elijah was in his time.

Our Advantage in the Battle

We are not to be ignorant of the enemy's schemes (See II Corinthians 2:11), but "let us be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist them, firm in your faith" (I Peter 5:8-9). Understanding Satan's schemes significantly increases our advantage in the battle. Being on the Lord's side assures the final victory. The church will win and the gospel will ultimately prevail. The issue for us is whether this will happen through us, or will it be our successors who witness this ultimate victory?

The entire church age has been one of spiritual warfare and it is intensifying as the end approaches. Satan is now being cast out of the heavenlies and down to the earth where he is coming with great wrath. Even so, we need not fear – He who is in us is much greater than he who is in the world. He who is least in the kingdom of God has more power than any anti-Christ. But just as the greatest military power today is vulnerable if it does not recognize the enemy's attack, we too, are vulnerable if we do not recognize Satan's schemes. The only way that he can defeat us is through our own ignorance or complacency. As we maintain our position in Christ, taking on the full armor of God and remaining vigilant, we will not only stand but will prevail against the gates of hell.

What is Witchcraft?

Witchcraft is basically counterfeit spiritual authority; it is using an evil spirit to dominate, manipulate or control others. The apostle Paul named witchcraft (also called "sorcery") as one of the works of the flesh (See Galatians 5:20). It does not have its origin in the carnal nature though it usually degenerates quickly into demonic power. When we try to use emotional pressure to manipulate others it is a basic form of witchcraft. When we use hype or soul power to enlist service, even for the work of God, it is witchcraft. When businessmen scheme to find pressure points while pursuing a deal, this, too, can be witchcraft. Many of the manipulative tactics promoted as sales tactics in marketing are basic forms of witchcraft. This is one reason why the New Age Movement is making such inroads into the ranks of professionals – they recognize real power.

The basic defense against counterfeit spiritual authority is to walk in true spiritual authority. Overcoming witchcraft is simple, but it is not easy. It is simple as entering into the rest of God and taking His yoke upon us. That is why the apostle Paul warned the church, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled [literally, “bewitched”] Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (II Corinthians 11:3). We are bewitched primarily by being led away from the simplicity of devotion to Christ. What we call “charismatic witchcraft” (this is not meant to denote any movement or group of people) usually gains entry to a church or ministry through selfish ambition. This will lead us to start striving to build, thereby causing us to depart from the rest of God, taking upon ourselves yokes that are not His.

Everything that God gives us to do He empowers us to do. Everything that we begin in our own strength must be maintained by our own strength, which leads to pressure, manipulation and control. Establishing our lives on truth and trusting the Lord to accomplish what concerns us is essential if we are ever to be free of the influence and pressure of witchcraft.

The True Seat of Authority

It is written that Jesus is seated upon the throne of David. This is, of course, a metaphor as Jesus does not sit upon the literal throne that David sat on. David established a position of true spiritual authority that would ultimately issue in the kingdom of God. David did for spiritual authority what Abraham did for faith. How did David establish a seat of true authority? He simply refused to take authority or seek influence for himself, but utterly trusted in God to establish him in the position that was ordained for him. David did not lift his own hand to seek recognition or influence, and neither must we if we are going to walk in true spiritual authority and not mere human political power.

Any authority or influence that we gain by our own manipulation or self-promotion will be a stumbling block to us, hindering our ability to receive a true commission and authority from God. If we are going to walk in true spiritual authority like David, we will have to utterly trust in the Lord to establish us in it and in His time. As Peter exhorted, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.” (I Peter 5:6). There is possibly nothing more devastating to our calling and potential for walking in true ministry than seeking influence or authority prematurely. Premature success can be one of the most dangerous things that can happen to us. Even though David had been called and anointed as the king many years before, he was completely patient in waiting for the position. David did not call himself the king, he let God do it, and he waited patiently for the people to recognize God’s will. In contrast Jezebel “calls herself a prophetess” (Revelation 2:20). We must beware of anyone who is seeking to establish his own recognition in ministry.

When the Lord promotes, He also supplies the grace and wisdom to carry the authority. There is no greater security available than knowing that God knows us and He has established our ministry. There is little that can breed insecurity faster than trying to maintain a position that we gained by our own promotion or manipulation, which is the root of probably most of the territorial preservation and divisions that presently exist in the body of Christ. Being established in true spiritual authority is a fortress that just cannot be penetrated by the enemy. Paul explained that, “the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Romans 16:20). When we know that we have been established by God, we have a peace that utterly crushes the enemy. Those who have established themselves in a position of authority, or influence, have little peace. The more our illegally gained influence increases, the more striving and manipulating it will take to hold it together. Anything that we do through manipulation, hype, or soul power, regardless of how noble or spiritual our goals are, is done in the counterfeit spiritual authority of witchcraft and is doomed to ultimate failure.

Therefore, the first principle in being delivered from the influence of witchcraft is to repent of all of the ways that we ourselves have used it. Satan cannot cast out Satan. Witchcraft, in even its most evil and diabolical forms, will have an open door into our lives if we ourselves are using it by manipulating or controlling for the sake of gaining a position.

We may be using such devices under the seemingly justified reasoning of trying to build the church, but God is not fooled and neither is the enemy. What God is building is not raised up by human might or power, but by His Spirit. Whatever we build by any other means is an affront to the cross and will ultimately oppose that which the Spirit is doing. The flesh wars against the Spirit, regardless of how good we try to make the flesh look.

The Gift of Discernment

The gift of discernment of spirits is a primary gift of the Holy Spirit enabling us to distinguish the spiritual source of influences in the church. Much of what is called “discernment” today is really suspicion rooted more in a territorial spirit of self-preservation than in the Holy Spirit. This is because so much of the authority that is exercised in the church today is counterfeit, which causes those who use it to be striving, fearful and intimidated by anyone that they cannot control.

True spiritual discernment is rooted in love that is, “patient, kind, not jealous, does not brag, is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly, does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (see I Corinthians 13: 4-7). Many consider that the readiness to, “believe all things, hope all things and endure all things” will lead to more of a naivete than to discernment, but the reverse is actually true. Unless we are seeing through the eyes of God’s love we are not seeing clearly and we will not interpret accurately what we see. True discernment can only operate through God’s love. God’s love is not to be confused with unsanctified mercy which gives approval to the things that God disapproves of. God’s love is utterly pure and easily distinguishes between the pure and the impure, and it always does it for the right reasons. Insecurity, self-preservation, self-promotion, unhealed wounds, unforgiveness, bitterness, etc. will all confuse and neutralize true spiritual discernment.

Spiritual Maturity

Learning to overcome rejection and misunderstanding just as the Lord did, by praying for the forgiveness of His persecutors, is essential if we are to walk in the Spirit, in true spiritual authority, or a true ministry.

If we are to accomplish the purposes of God, we must come to the level of maturity where “the love of Christ controls us” (II Corinthians 5:14). Love does not take into account wrongs suffered and is not motivated by rejection, which drives us to retaliation in the attempt to prove ourselves, and leads to a fall from walking in true authority.

Self-Promotion Leads to Divination

The over-promotion of one’s gift is a sure sign that there may also be other distinctive problems in that person’s ministry, even if the gift is real. A prophet who promotes himself will usually end up crossing the line between revelation and divination. True revelation comes to those who are yielded and submissive to the Lord, not through striving for it.

Prophetic experiences do not testify to one’s maturity or importance. Mature prophets will be given more to seeking a relationship and intimacy with the Lord than to experiences. Those who strive to have experiences may well succeed in having them, but from the wrong source. Revelation will come to a true prophet without striving. An apple tree does not worry about how many apples it will produce each day; if it is a real apple tree, apples will come. However, we must also distinguish between seeking and striving. It is right to seek the gifts of the Spirit, but that does not mean that we must strive for them. True seekers will be at peace and rest, not agitated. I prayed for 25 years to be caught up into the third heaven as Paul was before I began having experiences approaching that level. It is through faith and patience that we receive the promises (see Hebrews 6:12). True faith is demonstrated by patience. (Isiah 28: 16). Faith seeks, but it also rests and trusts in the wisdom of God.

Every bit of influence that we gain through self-promotion will someday become a snare to us. All of the money or other resources that we raise through self-promotion will actually become a stumbling block to our walking in the ministry to which we have been called.

Whatever is gained by striving and self-promotion will have to be sustained by the same, which will keep us from walking in the place where God called us, not to mention misleading whoever is naïve enough to follow us. Manipulation and hype are deadly enemies, not only to the prophetic ministry, but to all true ministry. Anyone who understands true ministry and true spiritual authority will not want one bit of influence that God does not give to them.

The Fear of Man Leads to Witchcraft

King Saul is good example of how a person with a true ministry and anointing from God can fall into this counterfeit spiritual authority, or witchcraft. When he was commanded to wait for Samuel before offering the sacrifice, he succumbed to the pressure and offered it prematurely. He said, “I saw that the people were scattering from me...and that the Philistines were assembling” (I Samuel 13:11). It is at this same point many who fall depart from the course; when we begin to fear the people or the circumstances more than we fear God, we will fall from walking in true authority. When we start to fear the people leaving more than we fear God leaving, we have departed from true faith.

Crossing the Line

It is noteworthy that Saul transgressed by offering sacrifices to God that he was not qualified to offer. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, not Levi. This is how witchcraft usually causes us to stumble, by compelling us to go beyond our designated realm of authority. Paul the apostle explained that he did not presume to go beyond the sphere of authority that had been appointed to him to reach as far as Corinth. This was a geographical limit that God had placed upon him at that time, which was obviously later lifted, but Paul was careful not to cross it. When we get beyond what God has called us to do we get beyond His grace, and then we are easy targets for the enemy. If Satan cannot stop you, he will try to push you too far.

This was the downfall of some of the “mega-ministries” during the decade of the 1980s, but it has also been the downfall of countless smaller ones who were trying to keep up with them. This was the inevitable consequence of some of the distorted concepts of faith that were promoted during that time. True faith is not always demonstrated by getting bigger and better, but sometimes by ending what was even a promise of God, which Abraham was willing to do when he offered Isaac.

If you are called to be a captain 500, you can increase your church attendance through promotions and good salesmanship, but even if you grow to 5,000, the day will come when church splits bring you right back to what you have the anointing for. The day will come when no amount of hype and soul power can hold the work together beyond what you have the grace for. The only way you can hold it beyond what you have the grace for is to become, to at least some degree, a cult.

Those who rally understand spiritual authority will also have a profound understanding of God’s grace. Their greatest fear will be to depart from that place of His grace. James and Peter understood this, which is why they both emphasized that, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6; see also I Peter 5:5). It is pride that compels us to go beyond what God has called us to do. The ultimate form of this pride is the “I-must-save-the-world” mentality. We may feel a real compassion when we try to respond to every human need, but it is a human compassion at best, and it has deceived us into trying to walk in something that even the Lord Jesus Himself said He did not do.

The Deadly Trap

Because witchcraft is basically rooted in the fear of man, and “the fear of man is a snare” (Proverbs 29:25), those who begin to operate in witchcraft are trapped – fear is the snare. The bigger the project or ministry that we have built with the hype, manipulation or control, the more we will fear anything or anyone that we cannot manipulate or control. Those who are caught in this deadly trap will fear those who walk in the true anointing and authority the most, because they are the least affected by the manipulation or control spirits.

This is why Saul became enraged at David and was consumed with destroying him, even though David was “but a flea” at the time. As the manipulation and control take dominion in our hearts, so will the paranoia. Those who have fallen into this deadly trap will become irrationally consumed at driving out or destroying anyone who threatens their control. Those who receive their authority, recognition, or security from men will, like Saul, end up in the witch’s house. That is why Samuel warned Saul that, “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” (I Samuel 15:23). When one in spiritual authority rebels against the Holy Spirit, the void will be filled by the counterfeit spiritual authority of witchcraft. This may begin as the simple reliance upon hype and soul power, but without repentance it can end up in the most diabolical forms of presumption and rebellion, as we see in the case of king Saul. Saul killed the true priests, persecuted the ones whose hearts were really after the Lord, and spent his last night in the house of a witch as the natural conclusion to the direction his life had taken.

Spiritual authority is a dangerous occupation. If we are wise, like David, we will not seek a position of authority, and we will not even take one which is offered until we are certain that the Lord is the One offering it. Satan tempts every one called by God with the same temptation he offered to Jesus; if we will bow down to him and his ways he will give us authority over kingdoms. God has called us to rule over kingdoms, too, but His way leads to the cross and can only be attained if we become servants of all. Satan’s temptation is to offer the quick and easy path to what God has in fact called us to attain.

The Responsibility of True Authority

One of the most frequent phrases attributed to David was “he inquired of the Lord.” On the few occasions when David made a major decision without inquiring of the Lord, the consequences were devastating. It was not just David who suffered the consequences of this presumption, but the people who were under him. The higher the position of authority the more dangerous it is, and the more people who are affected by even the seemingly insignificant decisions. When Adam fell billions of souls were to suffer. With authority comes very real responsibility. Only the most evil, perverted soul would crave such authority for selfish reasons. True spiritual authority is not an honor to be sought; it is a burden to be carried. Many who seek authority and influence do not know what they are asking for, and that their immaturity can be their doom if it is given to them before the time.

Even though David lived a thousand years before the age of grace, he knew grace possibly as well as anyone who has lived in this age. Yet, he, too, made mistakes which cost thousands of lives. It was probably because Solomon had observed his father, that the one thing he desired was wisdom to rule over God’s people. Anyone called to a position of leadership in the church must be of the same devotion. Even without being in a position of a spiritual authority, presumption can kill us. If we are in a position of authority it almost certainly will lead to our fall, and can lead to the fall of many others as well. The gift of a word of knowledge can be an awesome demonstration of power, and does carry a great deal of excitement, but those who are called to walk in spiritual authority would do well to seek the gift of a word of wisdom even more than words of knowledge. We need the power of words of knowledge to accomplish the work of the Lord, but we must have the wisdom to use that power properly.

The Safety Net

Those who attain prominence before humility will fall, because, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6). Therefore, if we have wisdom we will seek humility before position. True authority operates on the grace of God, and the more authority we walk in the more grace we need. We only have true spiritual authority to the degree that the King lives within us. True spiritual authority is not a position; it is a grace. Counterfeit spiritual authority stands on its position instead of grace. The highest spiritual authority, Jesus, used His position to lay down His life. He commanded those who would come after Him to take up their crosses to do the same. There is a simple distinguishing factor between the false ministry and the true; the false use their gift and the people for themselves; true ministries use their gifts and give themselves for the people.

Again, self-seeking, self-promotion and self-preservation are the most destructive forces to true ministry. Even if we have been anointed by God like king Saul was, we, too, can fall to witchcraft if these gain control over us.

Chapter Three - Our Shield Against Witchcraft

Not only must those in leadership be wary of using witchcraft, they must also be aware that they will be the primary target of those who do. It is an enemy we must watch for from within and without. It is just as subtle when it attacks from without as when it gains influence in our own hearts. This form of sorcery is seldom what we call black magic, but is usually a form of "white witchcraft." This includes well meaning people who do not have the confidence to be straightforward and have therefore fallen to subtle forms of manipulation to gain influence.

One prominent form of white witchcraft that is common in the church we call "charismatic witchcraft." This has possibly done more damage to the body of Christ than any other single factor, without yet being fully understood or combated. This is a "pseudo"(a so-called)-spirituality used to gain influence or control by using a super-spiritual mask. This is a source of false prophecies, dreams and visions which ultimately destroy or neutralize the work, or bring the leadership to the point where they overreact so as to despise prophecy altogether. The person using this form of witchcraft will almost always think that he has the mind of the Lord and that the leadership is in rebellion.

Flattery Will Get You Nowhere

Flattery is one of the most deadly tactics of the enemy, intended to divert a church or work from God's will. Prophets who have fallen into witchcraft through self-promotion will often be used by the enemy in this way. They will divert you from the course by prophesying that which is much more grand or appealing than what God has called you to. In this way the heart and the resources of the ministry will be sidetracked, and usually devastated by failure. Beware of those who try to gain influence by prophesying grandiose visions. Receive such words only from those who have nothing to gain by sharing them, or whose integrity has been fully established, never from those who are trying to establish themselves. Prophets of extraordinary gifts and authority in this century have themselves been tipped up by others who prophesied to them that they were greater than they were, or were called to do. On the day of judgment we may find that this form of witchcraft was far more devastating to the church than the attacks from cults, New Age, and all of the other false prophets combined.

It is very easy to discern false prophets who are from cults, but those who are in the church, who may be genuine believers, are much harder to distinguish. Yes, a true believer can still be a false prophet. We are false in any ministry that we presume without a commission from God. Prophetic authority cannot be established through any other credentials.

Letters of recommendation do have their place, but we should question anyone who tries to establish spiritual authority by what school they attended, the diplomas they have, or whose ministry they have sat under. Also, beware of those who are always telling stories of their own prophetic exploits. At best, this is evidence of immaturity. Those who are the real thing have kept company with God and His angels enough that they will not care very much about who else believes in them. If we are going to be free of the traps set by false prophets we must start recognizing self-promotion and rejecting the ministry of those who use it.

Resisting Witchcraft

The basic strategy we must use to begin freeing ourselves from the power of witchcraft is to bless those who curse us. This does not mean that we bless their works, but that we pray for them and not against them. In the case of the immature or unstable who have fallen to manipulation and self-promotion, we bless them by standing for truth and integrity without compromise. We can reject their ministry without rejecting them, but rather helping them to the path of deliverance and

redemption. We must also bless those who try to curse us with black magic or other forms of power. If the enemy can get us to retaliate he will then have us using the same spirit, and we will have multiplied the very evil we are trying to cast out. We are not warring against flesh and blood and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.(Eph. 6: 12). When we begin to pray blessing upon the people who are attacking us, then the evil power of control and manipulation is broken over them and us. We must not return evil for evil, but overcome evil with good.

Understanding New Age Witchcraft

The New Age Movement is basically a combination of witchcraft and Hinduism disguised to make it acceptable to white collar professionals. There is an important reason why this form of spiritualism is targeting this group. For almost 5,800 years of the earth's 6,000 year recorded history, nearly ninety-five percent of all workers were agricultural. In just a little over a century that statistic has been reversed, so that now less than five percent of the workers in the West are agricultural. This change was the result of technological advances. The five percent who work in agriculture now produce more than the ninety-five percent could in the last century.

In the mid-1950s, white collar workers exceeded the number of blue collar workers in the West. Since that time this majority has grown until it is now estimated that blue collar workers will go the way of agricultural workers in the near future, composing only a very small fraction of society. When the Lord predicted that "knowledge will increase" few understood the degree to which this would happen. Now information is the most valuable commodity in the world and the job of accumulating, interpreting, packaging and transferring knowledge is the largest industry on earth. Those involved in the knowledge industry are not only the most numerous, but they are also the most wealthy and most powerful. They are also the group that the church has become unsuccessful in reaching. This has helped to feed the proliferation of the New Age and other cults. Because man was created to have fellowship with God who is a Spirit, there is a Scriptural void in man that creates a spiritual hunger for the supernatural. Those who do not know the true supernatural power of God will become drawn to the evil and counterfeit supernatural powers of the enemy. Paul explained, "For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power." (I Corinthians 4:20). Satan knows this and is quite content to fight the battle on the level of words (doctrines, etc.). Regardless of how true or how well we can argue about our doctrines, Satan has little problem conquering those who do not know the power of God – the Kingdom does not consist of words, but power, those who really believe the Bible will walk in power. Righteousness is the result of believing in our hearts, not our minds, and those who do not know the power of God only believe in Him in their minds.

In light of some of the foolishness that manifested itself in the Pentecostal, Charismatic, Full Gospel and Third Wave Movements, which have all known the power of God, it is easy to understand why many would shy away from the gifts of the Spirit. But this, too, is one of the tests that separate the true believers from those who just know creeds or doctrines. God has called the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. Only the humble will come to what He is doing and He will give His grace only to them. Churches which have rejected the supernatural power of God have become irrelevant and unable to reach a world in supernatural conflict. The more secularized society becomes, the more it actually magnifies the hunger in man for fellowship with the supernatural. This is why atheists tend to be drawn to the most base forms of witchcraft and the black arts; they are deceived into thinking that they are touching the powers that are resident within man, but are actually demonic. The denominations and movements within the church which have rejected the supernatural power of God are almost all shrinking as they have become irrelevant and boring to even their own people, with little or no power to attract new people. Many of those churches and denominations that have rejected the power of God have already succumbed to influences from the New Age Movement. Others are succumbing to the spirit of the age in other forms, not only tolerating the perverted and unbelievers as members, but actually ordaining them pastors and leaders. Contrary to this, the denominations and movements that preach and walk in the supernatural power of God are not only growing, but, when measured as a single group, are far the fastest growing religious movement in the world.

Paul the apostle declared, “My message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.” (I Corinthians 2:4-5). The conflict between the kingdom of God and of kingdom of evil is both a conflict between truth and error, and it is a supernatural power confrontation. Both sides of which are seeking to fill the spiritual void in man created by the fall.

The entire history of God’s dealing with men has included demonstrations of supernatural power. It is a contradiction to claim to be a Biblical people if we do not walk in the supernatural power of God. The Bible itself teaches that those who really believe it will do the things that are written in it. Probably the most dishonoring theology ever devised by powerless Christians essentially states that the Holy Spirit was an Author who wrote just one book and then retired! To imply that we do not need Him anymore because we have a book about Him is not only ridiculous, it is deception in the highest order. The Lord is the same today as He was when the Bible was written, and He is still doing everything that He did then.

True Bible-based Christianity consists not only of words, but of demonstrations of God’s love and power to save, heal and deliver. Jesus stated that as the Father had sent Him into the world, He has sent us into the world (see John 17:18). Jesus did not just talk about God’s power to heal and save, He demonstrated it. If we are going to preach the gospel we are to preach it as He did, demonstrating God’s love and power. When He sent out His disciples it was to heal the sick and cast out demons as they preached the kingdom. He does not change and He has not changed the way He sends His true messengers.

Many of the Biblical prophecies concerning the end of the age address the supernatural nature of the times. The church that does not walk in power will become increasingly inadequate for dealing with the times and confronting the powers that come against her. To overcome the power of the enemy, we must “earnestly desire spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” (I Corinthians 14:1). The first defense against the deceptive supernatural power of the enemy is to know the true power of God.

Seeking Rightly

Most believers now desire spiritual gifts, but we must “earnestly” desire them if we are going to receive them. Even though most of the church is now “open” for God to use them in a demonstration of His power, He has decreed that one must ask, seek and knock in order to receive. Those who are just “open” for the Lord to use them almost never are actually used. Being “open” is usually a cover up for those who are either too fearful or too prideful to risk failure. It takes faith and seeking, if we are to receive.

Jesus made the way for us to be as close to God as we want to be. There is not a single person in the Bible, history, or alive today who is closer to the Lord than you can be. The only difference between those who are close to God and those who are not is that those who are close want Him badly enough to seek Him. The same is true of everything that He offers to us in His Word. Those who want the gifts of the Spirit badly enough will “earnestly desire” them enough to seek until they receive. “But, we may ask, “Isn’t that just self-promotion?” It can be. We can seek the gifts for the most base, selfish reasons, or we can seek them with the most pure motives. Most of us will fall somewhere between these extremes. I recognize very well that all of my motives are not pure, but I keep seeking out of obedience to His Word, while praying for the Lord to correct my motives. We can perform any Biblical discipline, such as praying, worshipping, even witnessing, out of selfish motives. Does this mean that we should stop doing these things? Of course not! We seek to do them with different motives. But if we wait until our motives are perfect we will never do any of them. It is often by doing them that we are changed. We are not changed in order to come into the presence of the Lord, but we are changed by coming into His presence.

Seeking to walk in the gifts of the Spirit is one form of seeking God, and even more importantly, it is being obedient. Our God is supernatural and we cannot truly desire fellowship with Him without desiring fellowship with the supernatural. Even those who have been hardened by doctrines and try to justify their powerlessness, long in their hearts for the supernatural. They simply allow their

fears to keep them from knowing God as He is – all powerful. We were all created for fellowship in the Spirit, which is supernatural or it would not be spiritual.

Truth and power

True Bible-based Christianity is the true Word of God verified by the true power of God. Jesus went about to “do and teach” (Acts 1:1). He would perform miracles before He taught. He knew that people who had an undeniable encounter with God would be far more open to what He would say so them. The power Jesus and His evangelists demonstrated was used to confirm and illuminate their teaching. The same is still true; the demonstrations of God’s power transform intellectual concepts into true faith in His teachings. It takes both the Word and the power of God to change the inner man. Without both, we may change our outward behavior but our hearts remain untouched. It is the spiritual void in the heart that must be filled by a true fellowship with God if we are going to be free of the spiritual influence and power of the enemy.

Because witchcraft is basically counterfeit spiritual authority, we will only be completely free from the power of witchcraft when we are completely submitted to the power and authority of God, which requires that we be utterly committed to truth. If the spiritual void that is in us is not filled with the real power and real authority of God, we will become dangerously subject to witchcraft in some form as we draw closer to the end of the age. The Battle of Armageddon is fought in the “valley of decision”; that day everyone on earth will be brought to the place of making a decision. It is a power confrontation and the choice is being made over power and authority. We will choose the power and authority of God or the power and authority of the evil one-but we will all choose.

Discerning Counterfeits

Each of the gifts of the Spirit that are available to the Church are presently counterfeited by the enemy. Those whose fears cause them to avoid spiritual gifts in order to keep from being deceived, are certain to be deceived. We must walk by faith, not fear, if we are going to stay on the path that leads to life. Fear will lead us to deception if we follow it; it takes a faith like Abraham’s that will risk leaving behind everything we know in order to seek that which God is building, if we are going to find that which God is doing.

The “gates of hell” are the enemy’s access doors into our lives, our congregations, movements, theology, etc. Fear is the primary gate that he uses, just as faith is used as the door for God to have access into our lives. If we are going to walk in the power of God we must have more faith in God to lead us into all truth than we do in the enemy to deceive us. Faith is the door to fellowship with God, because it takes faith to reach beyond the natural realm to the supernatural so that we can “see Him who is unseen.” As we walk in faith that which we start to see with the eyes of our heart starts to become more real to us than what we are seeing with our natural eyes. Then we start living more for the eternal than for the temporary. Those who walk in true faith are naturally going to appear foolish to those who live according to the wisdom of this world, or those who are of a “natural mind.”

We take a major step in being delivered from the power of witchcraft when we start to see the Lord so clearly that we serve and respect Him more than anything else; then we are no longer subject to the influence, manipulation and control of those who are still earthly minded, or who move in the power witchcraft. We do not need to study the darkness as much as we need to study the light.

Light is more powerful than darkness. When we open our shades at night darkness does not come in; light shines out in to the darkness. Light will always overpower darkness. If we walk in the light we will cast out the darkness. If we walk in the true supernatural power of God we will overpower the evil supernatural power as surely as Moses confounded the sorcerers of Egypt. But Moses would not have been successful had he gone to Egypt with no power, and neither will we if we try to set men free in our own strength. It will take God’s power to confront and drive out the increasing power of the enemy.

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The Power of Cowards – Black Magic

Sorcerers will usually avoid direct confrontation with those who have true spiritual authority because the demons that operate through them rightly fear being humiliated and overcome themselves. These will still attack those who are growing in true spiritual authority and are bearing fruit for the kingdom of God, but they will usually do it secretly. They do this indirectly by sacrificing and cursing according to their black arts.

There is power in satanic sacrifices that we must recognize if we are going to resist it. In II Kings 3:27, the king of Moab offered his oldest son as a burnt offering to his demon gods, and, “there came great wrath against Israel, and they departed” (from attacking Moab). It is not Biblical for a Christian to fear the enemy, but if we do not understand and properly respect his power, we will be vulnerable to it.

CHAPTER FOUR - The Systematic Attacks of Witchcraft

We need to recognize when we are being cursed with witchcraft so that we can defend against it and shine light into the darkness. Witchcraft operates like hornets who sting their victim over and over until they are killed or driven out. Following are what I call “the stings of witchcraft.” These are symptoms that witchcraft is being used against you. Individually, these symptoms may also be attributed to other causes, but if they start to come in this sequence, it is very likely that witchcraft is their source.

Sting 1 - DISCOURAGEMENT. Everyone gets discouraged at times, and it can be for many different reasons. However, if we become subject to growing discouragement for no apparent reason, witchcraft should be considered a possible source. When everything seems to go wrong, the difficulties begin to seem insurmountable and you start to think it is just too hard to go on, even though matters are really not any worse than usual, you are probably coming under spiritual attack. The enemy’s main strategy for afflicting you with discouragement is to weaken you for the next level of attack, which is:

Sting 2 – CONFUSION. Again, we must look for a general and pervading “spirit of confusion” for which there is no apparent reason. Here we begin to lose our clarity as to just what we have been called to do, which of course will weaken our resolve. This confusion is meant to compound the discouragement, making us even weaker and more vulnerable to further attack, which will usually come in the form of:

Sting 3 – DEPRESSION. This is a deeper problem than simple discouragement; it is an unshakable dread that is the result of both the discouragement and confusion combined, along with a general negligence in spiritual disciplines that has usually slipped in by this time. This leads to:

Sting 4 – LOSS OF VISION. This is the goal of the previous stings and works to increase the effect of all of them. Here we begin to doubt that God has called us to the task in the first place. The only way that we can sail through the storm of confusion is to hold our course. We cannot hold our course if we do not know where we are going. We will not try to hold our course if we begin to question our direction altogether. This will lead to our drifting in circles at the time when we most need to “make straight paths for your feet.” This sets us up for the next level of assault:

Sting 5 – DISORIENTATION. This is the combined result of depression, confusion and loss of vision. At this level we have not just forgotten the course we are supposed to be holding, we have even lost our ability to read the compass. The Scriptures will no longer speak to us, we will not trust the Lord’s voice and even the most anointed teaching and preaching will seem irrelevant. This is the point of spiritual incapacitation, the inability to function, which results in:

Sting 6 – WITHDRAWAL. This comes when we begin to withdraw or retreat from our purpose in the ministry, from fellowship with the rest of the Church, and often from our families and others we are close to. Withdrawal will result in DESPAIR.

Sting 7 – DESPAIR. Withdrawal from the battle leads quickly to hopelessness and without hope we can easily be defeated by the enemy, either through temptation, sickness or death. Even science has proven that when hope is removed, often the healthiest person will quickly deteriorate and die. With hope, men and women have lived long past the point when a normal body would have given up. DESPAIR will always lead to DEFEAT.

In this strategy we can see that the enemy's purpose is to weaken us so that we begin to fall behind; then we can more easily be picked off. In Scripture the Amalekites were typical of Satan and his hordes. It was the practice of the Amalekites to attack the weak and/or defenseless. As the camp of Israel crossed the wilderness, the Amalekites picked off those who fell behind the rest of the camp. This is why Israel was told that there would be perpetual war with the Amalekites. When Israel's kings were commanded to fight them, they were also commanded to utterly destroy them and not to take any spoil. We have a perpetual war against Satan and we cannot take any prisoners. Neither can we use that which is his in the service of God. When King Saul disobeyed and kept alive Agag, king of the Amalekites, and kept some of the spoil, "in order to sacrifice it to the Lord," it represented a failure of the most foolish kind for any leader of God's people. In those days, keeping a rival king alive after a battle was only done for two reasons: to make him either an ally or a slave. Saul foolishly thought that he could make the one who personified Satan himself either an ally or a slave.

It was no accident that it was an Amalekite who killed Saul and then carried the news of his death to David. This Amalekite thought that the news would be pleasing to David, but David was discerning and had him killed (see II Samuel 1:1-16). If we do not obey the Lord and utterly destroy the enemy we battle, he will end up destroying us. There can be no alliance with the enemy; he must be utterly destroyed. We must not be foolish enough to think that we can use the enemy as our slave; in his guile he will quickly turn the tables.

Witchcraft is being used against the church. Many who have failed to recognize it have been defeated, lost their vision, their ministries, their families and even their lives. This is not a sensationalism, it is a fact. Paul said that we do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers (see Ephesians 6:12), and wrestling is the closes form of combat. The enemy is going to fight; he is going to wrestle with us; if we decide that we just are not going to fight we will get pinned! A Christian has no option as to whether or not he is going to do spiritual warfare if he wants to survive. But how do we combat this witchcraft? We must first look at the basic principle of spiritual warfare required for every victory.

In the book of Revelation, we see that the saints (believers) overcome Satan by: 1) the blood of the Lamb; 2) the word of their testimony; and 3) loving not their lives even to death. (see Revelation 12:11).

We overcome by the blood of the Lamb as we take our stand on what He has already accomplished for us through the cross. The victory has already been won and there is no way that we can lose, as long as we abide in Him.

The word of our testimony is the Scripture. Every time the enemy challenged Jesus He simply responded with Scripture, countering the enemy's temptation with God's truth. The Word of God is "the sword of the Spirit"; with it we can ward off the blows from his deceptive words, as well as attack him. Of all the pieces of armor we are commanded to put on (see Ephesians 6:10-18), the sword is the only offensive weapon.

That they "loved not their lives even unto death," reveals the utter commitment to follow Him regardless of the price. We are called to take up our crosses daily, to do all things for the sake of the gospel, to no longer live for ourselves but for Him. (II Cor. 5: 15b). To the degree that we remain self-centered we will be vulnerable to the enemy's attack.

When we have reckoned ourselves dead to this world, as crucified with Christ, then the enemy no longer has any access to us because he has no more access to Him. If we are dead to this world,

what can be done to a dead man? It is impossible for the dead to be offended, to be tempted, to fear, or to be continually looking for the easy way out since he has already paid the ultimate price. All of these are required for every spiritual victory. Anything less will result in less than a victory. We may make occasional, halting advances, but we will sooner or later be pushed back. But it is clear that at the end of the age there will be an army of God raised up that will not settle for occasional advances – they have committed themselves to the fight and will not stop until there is the complete victory over the enemy that was promised.

It is understood that the total victory will not be accomplished without the personal return of the Lord, but we must fight until He comes, and fight to take every bit of ground that we can, until He appears and takes us up to return with Him and finish the fight. “The earth is the Lord’s, and all it contains.” (Psalm 24:1). Until the earth has been completely recovered from the domain of Satan our fight is not over. None of us would fight to win if we did not believe that victory was possible. The whole prophetic testimony of Scripture is that the Lord, the Church, and the Truth are going to prevail. Satan is being cast down to the earth; he will come with great wrath and there is going to be a time of trouble like the world has never known before – but we will win!

Isaiah 14:16-17 says, that when we see Satan we are going to marvel at the pitiful nature of the one who caused so much trouble! He who is in the very least of the saints is much greater than he is, or his antichrists. These times are not to be feared – this is our chance! As Isaiah 60:1-2 declares, when darkness is covering the earth the glory of the Lord is appearing on His people. The darkness will just make His glory upon us appear that much brighter. We must start fighting in order to win, giving no more ground to the enemy and taking back what he has stolen.

To effectively combat witchcraft we must determine that we are going to resist Satan until he flees from us. Our goal is more than just driving the enemy out of our own lives; we then want to pursue him until he is driven out of everyone else in whom he has established a stronghold. The following are some of the ways that we can combat these seven specific areas of Satan’s attack through witchcraft.

DISCOURAGEMENT. Discouragement never comes from God; He is the author of faith and the hope which never disappoints. He does discipline us when we need it, but he never does this by afflicting us with discouragement. “The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.” (James 3:17). Discouragement is nowhere named as the wisdom that comes from above and it is not a fruit of the Spirit. We must learn to quickly and instinctively reject discouragement and give it no place in our thoughts. We will be led by what we think or feel. Thus we must take every thought captive and make them all obedient to Christ; we must not ever allow discouragement to dictate our course. Faith is the fruit of the Spirit and the shield of our armor that counters discouragement. If we begin to get discouraged it is because we have dropped our shield. Pick it back up!

CONFUSION. Remember, that “God is not the author of confusion” and what you are being hit with is not coming from God. In the military one of the primary elements of battle that a soldier is trained to handle is confusion. There will rarely be a battle when there is not confusion. Very few battles, or projects accomplished, will ever go exactly as planned. The same is true in spiritual warfare. The disciplined soldier who understands this aspect of warfare learns to use the confusion to his own advantage. He does not let it increase his discouragement but begins to anticipate and look for an opportunity to gain an advantage over the enemy. We must learn that confusion is part of the battle and not to be surprised or affected by it. Our resolve to stand and fight will quickly dispel this aspect of the attack.

DEPRESSION. God gave to Cain the most effective remedy for depression. “Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen [the ancient expression for depression]? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.’” (Genesis 4:6-7). Because depression is usually the result of allowing

discouragement and confusion to cause us to drift from even our basic spiritual disciplines, such as reading the Word, prayer, fellowship, etc., picking them up again with resolve will almost always start to reverse the downward spiral. If we focus on doing what we have been called to do, we will be able to throw off the sin that so easily entangles us.

LOSS OF VISION. This attack can also be turned to our advantage and used as an opportunity. When you begin to lose your vision, commit yourself to strengthening your vision. Sink your roots deeper and establish your purpose even more firmly upon the Word of God. When God begins to lead us into a purpose we should record how He speaks to us. Review all of the ways that He has led you and search the Scriptures to even more firmly establish His leading.

Above all, hold your course! Do not change your course until you can clearly see the new course. In World War I one of the most effective tactics of the enemy was to lay a smoke screen in front of allied convoys. As the convoy entered the smoke and lost their vision, they would start turning at any perceived sound or whim; the resulting collision sank more ships than those sunk by enemy torpedoes. The allies finally developed a simple strategy to overcome this, which will also work for us. When in the smoke every ship was to hold its previous course without deviation. They would soon all sail out of the other side into clear air. The same strategy will enable us to more quickly escape what is clouding our vision. When you lose your vision just hold your course and keep going forward.

DISORIENTATION. As an instrument flight instructor, the first thing I had to teach a pilot was that, when flying on instruments, his feelings cannot be trusted and must be disregarded. If an instrument conditions, a pilot tires to fly by his feelings, he will quickly lose control of the plane. When you are surrounded by clouds, you can be flying perfectly straight and level but begin to feel like you're turning. If you react to this feeling, you will begin to turn, going off course or maybe even turning the plane upside down.

In a certain navigation test conducted a group of pilots were flown into instrument conditions without instrument training, and one hundred percent of them lost control of their planes when they tried to rely on their feelings for guidance. I believe that the same is true of Christians who enter spiritual conditions of reduced visibility or "spiritual clouds" and try to rely on their feelings for guidance – they will lose control.

The "instruments" we have been given to walk by are found in the Bible. We do not walk by feelings, but by faith in the sure testimony of the Word of God. The Word of God will keep us oriented and on course if we put our trust in it even though our feelings may be telling us to do otherwise.

WITHDRAWAL. In the recent Persian Gulf War, the majority of casualties were either reserves or civilians. The safest place to be in the war was on the front line. This is also true in spiritual warfare. When you're being pressed in a battle you cannot call a timeout.

On the front line you cannot ask the enemy to stop the battle because you have a headache or want to take a coffee break. On the front line you know the dangers and you do not let your guard down.

Every Christian is on the front line every day whether he likes it or not. Satan will not give you a timeout. It is when we start to consider ourselves a "civilian" or not a soldier, that we will be the most vulnerable to his attack. Neither is a Christian ever in the reserves. Seldom do battles rage along the entire front for the entire time. There are times of reprieve from conflict, but when you know that you are on the front, even your breaks are taken with vigilance, knowing that a fresh attack can come at anytime. Christians must never take off their spiritual armor and must never lose their vigilance.

There are times and occasions in warfare for strategic retreats. There are times when we over commit ourselves spiritually and must draw back, but that is not the same as withdrawal from the battle. Even when we have over committed ourselves, retreat should be a last resort – an army in retreat is in its most vulnerable condition. If at all possible we should try to at least hold our ground until our position can be strengthened.

We are told to give thanks to God, “who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 15:57), “in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37), and that He “always leads us in His triumph in Christ” (II Corinthians 2:14). Defeat is not an option in Christ. We will gain the victory in that which He has led us to do. The only way that we can be defeated is to quit.

Even when we discover that we have acted presumptuously without being commissioned by God, we do not quit, we repent. There is a difference between quitting and stopping because of repentance. One is a defeat; the other is an adjustment that will always result in further victories. Repentance comes because of the truth that sets us free; defeat will result in a spiritual bondage to the power of the enemy.

DESPAIR. The Lord’s first observation concerning man was that it was not good for him to be alone. We are social creatures and when we withdraw from fellowship we will usually sink into the deepest pits of hopelessness – despair. At this point in the downward spiral we must return to fellowship and get help in reversing the slide or we will be defeated.

Witchcraft is basically the practice of cursing others. This cursing does not just come through cults or black magic arts, but can even come through those who love us, have good intentions, and are trying to bless us, but are doing it by trying to manipulate us. Witchcraft is rooted in manipulation or a control spirit, regardless of who it comes through.

The mother who manipulates her son or daughter into marrying her choice has done it through witchcraft, and such relationships usually have to be held together by manipulation and control. The prayer group that uses prayers to expose others is gossiping for the sake of manipulation; this is not prayer- it is witchcraft. Much of what is written in the name of Christian journalism as an attempt to keep the church informed is gossip, used for unethical influence or manipulation – this, too, is witchcraft.

Spiritual leaders who use manipulation, hype or control to build their churches or ministries are operating in a counterfeit spiritual authority equivalent to witchcraft. Much of what is taught in business schools is a form of manipulation or control that is witchcraft. Many of the strategies the church has borrowed from secular journalism and the business world have brought witchcraft into the camp, and it must be removed if we are to be free to accomplish our purpose for this hour.

Many of the yokes and human expectations have some power of manipulation and witchcraft attached to them that the enemy has established as a stronghold to conflict with the calling of God in our lives. This is not a license to disregard the expectations of our parents, teachers, employers, etc. We are known by the Lord before we were born, and He placed many of these influences in our lives to help steer us toward our purpose in Him. But some of the yokes and expectations that the well-intentioned parent, teacher or coach puts on us must be cast off! The yokes that are placed on us which are not from the Lord will become clear as we come to know our calling and purpose in Him – the truth will set us free.

The only yoke that we must take is the Lord’s yoke. His yoke is easy and His burden is light; and when we embrace it we actually find rest and refreshment instead of pressure and discouragement. These forms of “white” witchcraft can have just as much power as that which comes through black magic arts. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil has two sides. “White witchcraft” is usually rooted in a good intentions but it is the good side of the Tree of Knowledge, whose fruit is just as poisonous as that which comes from the evil side of this tree. White and black witchcraft may be different branches but they have the same root and the same deadly poison.

Those who are unstable will often distort this in order to rebel against God’s ordained authority over their lives, receiving the just retribution. King Saul is a personification of one who is ordained by God but fell from his place of true spiritual authority to operate in counterfeit spiritual authority. King David is a personification of true spiritual authority. How did David react to Saul? He was willing to serve the house of Saul until Saul chased him away. Even then he never retaliated, rebelled, or tried to undermine Saul’s authority, but honored him as “the Lord’s anointed.”

Even though David was called to take Saul’s place, he never lifted his hand against Saul, but determined that if God had really called him then He would have to establish him. – He

demonstrated the exact opposite of the manipulative or control spirit and by that overcame the evil with good. Had David manipulated his way into the kingdom he would have almost certainly fallen to witchcraft just like Saul. But David was of a different spirit.

Those who are the target of any form of witchcraft will usually feel the stings through the sequence of attacks listed above. If we respond to the attack constructively, we cannot only be free of its influence ourselves, but we can also help to free those who operate in witchcraft. The manipulation and control spirits gain entrance through fear. It is the fearful and insecure who become so obsessed with controlling others that they use evil influence and it will take a demonstration of perfect love to cast out these fears. Pray for your attackers to have a revelation of the perfect love of God. Our greatest victory is to win those who are in the enemy's grip, not just to afflict them back.

Blind –siding Yourself

There is another source of witchcraft that can be one of the most unexpected sources of our discouragement, confusion, depression, loss of vision, disorientation and despair – ourselves! When we use manipulation, hype or control on others we open ourselves to the consequences.

Before we look at others to find the source we should first look at ourselves. Satan cannot cast our Satan; we will not be able to cast witchcraft out of others if we are ourselves operating in it. Most who have been subject to witchcraft have tried to combat it in the flesh, actually using the same spirit. When we do that it does gain a foothold in our own lives that must be broken before we will have the authority to deliver others.

It is the Father's intent to bring down every form and manifestation of witchcraft operating in the church. It is a serious offense and will not continue to be tolerated. Only after we have been freed from this terrible evil we will also be free to walk in the unprecedented power that can only be entrusted to those who walk in true spiritual authority.

CHAPTER FIVE - The Jezebel Spirit

The spirit of Jezebel usually gains entry when oppression or abuse turns one to bitterness and rebellion. We must keep in mind that God has compassion for the oppressed, and that He even had compassion on the Jezebel in Revelation, giving her "time to repent" (see Revelation 2:21). However, he also rebuked the leaders of that church for tolerating her (see verse 20). We must have compassion on all sinners, but we cannot tolerate their sin.

Those with a Jezebel spirit will attach themselves to almost every anointed church for ministry. Our ultimate goal should always be to see them delivered and healed, but if they do not repent of their ways, they must be removed or they will release everything from continual discouragement and disruptions, to disastrous divisions that will leave many deeply wounded.

First we must identify the Jezebel spirit. The following are characteristics commonly associated with this spirit: Those with a Jezebel spirit will:

- Continually testify of themselves through their revelation.

- Often seek constant recognition; they thrive on being mentioned from the pulpit or by leaders, and may be offended or become distant if they are not.

- try to get close to the leaders, usually through flattery or grand prophecies.

- seldom want to be in authority, but will seek to be "the power behind the throne."

- usually attract the weakest members of the church, and will begin to spiritually enslave them with flattery and/or grand prophecies.

- use their spiritual slaves to spread slander, discontent and division.

- often try to be matchmaker, and then try to control the relationships that are put together.

- most often have weak spouses (like Ahab), but will proclaim them to be very strong, spiritual, and greatly gifted.

- steal prophecies from others in order to make themselves look better.

- usually feel persecuted.

often make excuses and never acknowledge their own sins.

usually be works oriented, often fasting and praying, but with an intent to be considered spiritual.

often have bitterness, especially toward their father or another male authority figure.

often have flawed reasoning, which is covered by a "pseudo"-spirituality which implies that only the spiritual can understand them.

Deliverance from Jezebel

First, we must understand that someone may have one or more of these characteristics but not have a Jezebel spirit. However, if a majority of these do apply to someone you very well may be dealing with this problem. These are all serious flaws that one should be healed or delivered from before he is trusted with a ministry, or with authority in the church.

Some theologians and ministers believe that this spirit was released in the Garden at the time of the fall. If so, it was probably not what caused Eve to be deceived, but could well have been the result of her husband trying to shift the blame on her for the fall (See Genesis 3:12). God gave the command not to eat from the tree to Adam, not to Eve. Though Eve was deceived by the serpent, Adam was the one with responsibility. Adam was not deceived, he just sinned. Before the fall Eve was his helpmate, it was after the curse was given to the woman that, “your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (Genesis 3:16).

The curse of the fall is removed in Christ. This was legally accomplished on the cross, but is a salvation that must be worked out as we are delivered from the consequences of the fall. (Phil. 2: 12-13). The original relationship between the man and the woman was not for the man to rule over the woman, or the woman to rule over the man, but for both of them to rule together. As we are delivered from the consequences of the fall, the closer this relationship should return to the way that it was originally intended. We must never lose sight of our ultimate goal. When we come to fully abide in Christ there is “neither male nor female” (Galatians 3:28). We must also understand that it is just as much a part of the curse for the man to have to rule over the woman as it is for the woman to be ruled over. Peace and fulfillment will not come to either until they have been delivered from the consequences of the fall and can walk in right relationship with each other.

There can be a major difference between leading and ruling. One can rule without being a true, gifted leader. A true, gifted leader will not dictate policy as much as lead. However, we know that even Christ will rule over the nations with a rod of iron when He returns, but His bride will be at His side.

In Scripture we can see that a husband was given authority over his wife because of the fall, but nowhere do we see a specific Scriptural mandate for authority to be given to women over men, though we do have examples in Scripture where women do have authority. This does not mean that women cannot have authority with men. I have three daughters who are prophetically gifted. I learned quickly how specifically the Lord could speak through them. By the time they were three they had my attention when they wanted it. They do not have authority over me, but they do have authority with me. It is in this same way that the church does not have authority over Christ, and never will, but we do have authority with Him. As His bride, it is His goal for us to rule and reign with Him. His goal is that we will be so one with Him that we will do even greater works on the earth than He did. This should be the same goal of every husband for his wife.

Hope for Jezebel

It is one of the remarkable statements of God’s love and grace in all of Scripture that the Lord gave Jezebel “time to repent,” even when she was seducing the Lord’s people. First, He gave her time to repent because it takes time. This evil gets its roots so deep into a person that it can be one of the longest and most difficult deliverances. However, as deep as Satan has been able to get his roots into a person, that is how deeply they will be filled with the Lord once they are delivered.

Those who are delivered from this spirit can come to know and walk in true spiritual authority on the highest levels. A woman who is delivered from this spirit will become one of the most beautiful

and gracious examples of what Eve was really meant to be. A man who is delivered can become a great example of the nobility, dignity and true spiritual authority that Adam was called to be. Once overcome this problem, it can be a stepping stone to reaching even higher levels of the trust required for the spiritual authority we will need in these last days. Remember that we do not war against flesh and blood. If the Lord could give Jezebel time to repent, we must confront her wicked ways or this power will do great damage to the church.

CHAPTER Six - The Control Spirit and Legalism

It is one of the basic strategies of the enemy of our souls to enslave the church through “spiritual totalitarianism.” This is done by controlling and oppressing believers through fear and intimidation. Fear is the counter-power to faith, and the two are locked in a life and death struggle for every believer. One of the most important battlegrounds for the hearts of men is spiritual slavery versus liberty. The apostle Paul stated, “For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness.” (Romans 10:10). Fear and intimidation can pressure man into believing with their minds, and even their emotions, but will never change men’s hearts. Fear and intimidation used against someone will never result in their having a true faith. Fear is the power of the kingdom of darkness which enslaves. When fear is able to control us, then fear has, in one sense, become our lord. The degree to which faith in God controls us determines His lordship in our lives. Faith is the power of the kingdom of God which sets men free to worship God in Spirit and truth. Fear rules men through external pressure and intimidation. Faith rules from the heart.

A parrot can be taught to say and do the right things, but they will not be in his heart – it is just “parroting.” Acceptance which is based on intimidation or pressure will never result in true righteousness or a heart change, regardless of how accurate or true the doctrine is that is being forced upon us. To be true, our faith must come from the heart, not just the mind, because “living waters” can come only from the innermost being, the heart. We can never really live the truth unless we are able to live from our hearts. We will never be able to teach or preach that which imparts true life until we preach from our hearts where the true living waters abide. In order to be faithful to what is in the heart there must be freedom.

The tendency to associate the “heart” with feelings often causes confusion. Our feeling can come from our hearts, or they can come from other sources which are not our true hearts. Few people, even few Christians really understand their own hearts. Many have so covered their hearts with spiritual or social facades that they are not in touch with what is there. We also have the problem that Jeremiah described. “The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9). Even so, it is crucial that we do understand and live by a true heart because that is the only place that true living waters can flow.

One of the ultimate goals of true faith is to change men’s hearts, then release them to live by their hearts. Because our hearts are the reservoir of the living waters, when we are freed to live by what is in our hearts, there is a release of the living waters that all men are thirsting for. Christians should be the most free people on earth, and a striking contrast to the rest of humanity. When true Christianity is finally revealed to the world, it will be the greatest light on earth. All men are going to see what they themselves were created to be. This will happen before the end. Why not now? Why not us?

Revival is essentially the release of the living waters within believers. This is why one of the greatest enemies of every revival has been the control spirit. The control spirit enslaves believers and stops the flow of living waters that creates and maintains every revival.

Satan obviously cares very little about what we believe as long as we believe in our minds and not our hearts. In this way truth is used like an inoculation, we are given just enough to appease our consciences, but not enough to change our hearts and bring forth a true faith and a release of living water. Satan’s first strategy is to keep religion intellectual. He will give you as much truth as you want as long as he knows you will use it wrongly. When he sees the truths going beyond the intellectual and reaching hearts, he then sends a control spirit to stop it. The Lord uses truth to set ..

men free, but Satan tries to use truth to bind men, causing them to submit to a control spirit instead of the Holy Spirit.

The Nature of Obedience

The basic conflicts between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of God concerns slavery and freedom. Jesus said: “If you abide in My Word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32). His truth will make us free as long as we abide in His word, but we must abide in His word. The truth makes us free and freedom is required to comprehend the truth from the heart. Obedience is important to the Lord, but God is not just after obedience. – He wants us to obey for the right reasons, because we have His heart.... . . .

A woman may wear a hair covering to church as a symbol of her submission to authority. Does wearing that covering make her submissive? Wearing the covering is not the submission, but rather a symbol of it. A rebellious woman may also wear a covering; she may even do it as compensation for her rebellion in an attempt to disguise her lack of submission. The Lord does not ask us to just wear the symbols of our submission – He is looking for submission from the heart. Many of the doctrines promulgated by the church place more emphasis on the wearing of doctrinal “coverings” than on making changes in our hearts. The Lord is not just concerned about what we believe, but also how we believe.

If all that God required from man was obedience, He would not have given a choice to Adam and Eve in the garden. He could have easily programmed man to always obey, but then He would have only had robots. If there was going to be true obedience from the heart there also had to be the freedom to disobey. That is why the Lord placed the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden; it was not to cause man to stumble, but it was the place where man could choose to disobey Him. If we are going to have worship in Spirit and truth, worship from the heart, the capability to choose not to worship must also exist.

Worship from the Heart

What good is worship from one incapable of doing otherwise? If our typical “worship services” are an indication of the state of our worship, the Lord might have done just as well to have invented the computer and programmed thousands of them to sing praises to Him. When we are told when to stand, when to sit, what to sing, is any of it coming from our hearts? We may have order, and it may sound good, but is it touching the heart of God. It is difficult to see how it could. Typical church worship whether it is Traditional, Pentecostal, Charismatic, or Third Wave, is usually little more than an attempt to warm up the audience for the main act –the preaching.

We must seek the Lord as to how to attain true worship in our services. Even the most progressive worship quickly gets trapped in spiritual ruts that make it little more than rituals learned by rote, which the Lord said He would never receive as worship. Unless worship enables our hearts to touch the heart of God is not worship at all-it is just noise. If we touch the heart of God our hearts will be changed. Every worship service should be an encounter with the manifest presence of the Lord. When we behold the glory of the Lord we will be changed by that glory. However, true worship does not come by trying to see the Lord, it comes from seeking Him.

There are some obvious, practical steps that could be taken to help bring a reality to our worship services. First, why not let the people sit if they want to? If the people have the freedom to sit, when they stand it will be to truly honor the Lord. The “singing in the spirit” that was born (or reborn) during the Welsh Revival, can also be a wonderful format for allowing individuals to truly touch the heart of God with their own worship, as long as it, too, does not just become another ritual. When it is mechanical, or just another tradition, it can become counterproductive, but when believers are released to sing what is in their own hearts to the Lord we have the greatest potential for entering true worship that is in Spirit and truth.

Most congregations do need worship leaders to give some order and direction to a service. The Lord uses leadership in everything, including worship, as we see in Tabernacle of David and even in the revelations of heaven. But if we are going to touch true worship, there is a point when the

worship leader must move out of the way, because as long as we have our attention on the leader we are not really worshipping the Lord from our own hearts; we are following a leader.

I have been in many congregations who did have a worship leader because they claimed to be led entirely by the Holy Spirit, but were in fact being led more often by the immature and the rebellious. To release a congregation in this effort prematurely can be disastrous, but we should have a vision of maturing to that level. There is a point where **true worship can bring such a manifest presence of the Lord** that neither the flesh nor the devil will dare to show themselves. But even if the flesh and the devil do get in from time to time, it may be better to have some wild fires from time to time than to have no fire at all. For there to be the potential for obedience from the heart, God had to give man a choice.

The greater the freedom to choose, the greater the potential for choosing wrongly, and the greater the potential for true heart obedience towards God. When we erect excessive controls, walls and barriers, around our services, programs or doctrines, so that they cannot be disobeyed, then we are only creating spiritual robots who may say and do the right things, but not from their hearts. This is actually counterproductive to producing true Christian faith.

His Sheep Know His Voice

As the apostle taught, “Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.” (II Corinthians 3:17). If we are going to walk by the Spirit there must be liberty. When we erect a system of rules and regulations to force obedience, we are prohibiting our ability to walk by the Spirit. The New Testament was not meant to be just another Law; it was meant to give us general guidelines while promoting the freedom for us to hear from the Lord ourselves about most issues, even very important ones. The Lord’s sheep must know His voice and the freedom of the New Testament is meant to compel each of us to seek Him and to know Him for ourselves.

For example, the Lord does care very much about having His church built according to His own design, but the New Testament is surprisingly ambiguous about both church government and church structure, purposely. This is not so that we can just do whatever we want, but so that we must seek Him and hear from Him to get His instructions. There are some important general principles that we can find as a pattern in the New Testament about church structure, but they are meant to be general so as to promote the need for His builders to each seek Him and hear from Him, because He is the Builder of His house!

The Lord gave us the New Testament to outline some clear general guidelines about life, the church, how we relate to governments, etc., that we must comply with to stay on the path of life. However, these guidelines are general enough to allow for, and promote, liberty. This is not liberty for the sake of license, but so that we would have to seek Him and follow the Holy Spirit in order to be led into “all” truth. The Lord did not say that when He went away He was going to leave us a book to lead us into all truth, but that He was going to give us His Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth. We should be very thankful for the priceless book that He left to us, but He never meant for it to take the place of the Holy Spirit, or His own place in our life. When it does, it is not just being misused, it has become an idol.

True Christianity is essentially a relationship with Christ, and relationship is essentially communication. As the Lord Jesus affirmed during His own temptation, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4). As we mentioned earlier, this is the word that “proceeds”, present tense, not that “proceeded,” past tense. It is not enough for us to live by what He has said in the past, but we must be hearing from Him today. This is not to imply that this is for the establishing of new doctrines, or to add to the canon of Scripture, but that there is a living, personal relationship that we must all have with Him. This was the lesson of the manna in the wilderness –it had to be gathered fresh everyday. We, too, much hear from Him everyday-we are called to live by a proceeding word, which reflects a continuing relationship. The quality of every relationship is based on communication. The quality of our faith is based on our communication with the Lord, and the New Testament was meant to promote the liberty that enables, and even requires, each one of us to develop that communication.

Freedom is a prerequisite for a true relationship. If a man forces relations with his wife he is committing rape, not love. The Lord will not rape His bride, the Church, but he woos her, causing her to desire submission out of love. It is the evil one who forces and pressures us into obedience or commitments and such will never bring forth true righteousness which can only come from the heart. Manipulation, intimidation and control are not from the Spirit of Truth, but are evil spirits that drive man from the truth and seek to bind them in darkness.

CHAPTER SEVEN - The Modern Pharisees

One of the great spiritual battlegrounds of the Reformation was Satan's attempt to keep the Bible out of the hands of the common people. This battle continues to rage today because Satan knows very well that when the "common people" receive the Word of God the revolution has begun and that he is about to be overthrown as the prince of this evil age. For this reason the Lord stated as evidence that He was indeed the Messiah, that "the poor have the gospel preached to them."

The Lord does love the poor, but this also has a strategic significance. Present rulers, even spiritual rulers, are usually too comfortable, and too protective of their territory, to respond to the Word of God in the radical obedience required to release the living waters from which revival springs. True revival is a revolution. It brings change, and those who are comfortable will always resist change.

This battle to keep the Word of God out of the hands of the common people was also raging in Israel when the Lord Himself walked the earth. Interestingly, the Pharisees, who loved and esteemed the Scriptures possibly more than any other sect of their time, were the enemy's main force of arms in this battle. Because of this devotion, they were given the primary responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the Scriptures through centuries of copying and recopying. For this every lover of the Scriptures does owe them much. But in their zeal to protect the Scriptures from abuse, the Pharisees implemented a system of Scriptural interpretation based more on their own tradition than on the actual text.

These traditions caused them to miss, and even persecute, the One who was the personified Word of God – Jesus. Today there are ultraconservative camps in Christianity in which modern Pharisees are doing essentially the same thing that their spiritual counterparts did –in their zeal to protect the Scripture from doctrinal abuse they have erected a reactionary system of interpretation. This system does in fact protect the Scriptures from the abuse of many who would misinterpret them, but at the same time it works to prohibit those who would radically obey the truth from receiving it. Everyone who loves the truth wants to have accurate doctrine. However, when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, we will not be judged on how accurate our doctrines were, but rather by our deeds. Accurate doctrine is not an end in itself, but a means to our being confronted to the image of Christ to better enable us to abide in Him. Sound doctrine enables us to better determine the will of God so that we can obey Him. But we can have the Bible memorized yet still not know the Truth because Truth is a Person. The Pharisees loved the Scriptures and many today fall prey to this same deception. We cannot love God without loving His word, but we can elevate the written Word above Him and make an idol out of the Scriptures, allowing them to supplant our relationship to Him, and to remove the Holy Spirit from the church.

Most believers are not in danger of esteeming the written Word too much, but rather of esteeming it too little, and neglecting this priceless gift from the Lord to His people. However, much of this neglect is caused by the ecclesiastical professionals who have imparted such a fear of error that many Christians are afraid to search for truth. At the same time many Christians leaders have esteemed the written Word above the living Word and have begun to worship the book of the Lord in place of the Lord of the book. This has caused them to make in New Testament into just another law. Just as the Pharisees, the greatest lovers of the Scriptures were the greatest enemy of the Word Himself, some of those who are most outwardly devoted to protecting the integrity of the Word are the greatest enemies of the truth today. These modern Pharisees work through fear and intimidation, the archenemies of truth, just as their spiritual forefathers did. Those who are controlled by fear will be the most threatened by anyone they cannot control through intimidation.

People who believe God with their hearts know the One in whom they believe. When we know that we are known by God, we will not be overly concerned about what anyone else thinks of us. Therefore we will not be threatened or intimidated by anyone on earth. Those with this constitution will make choices based on what is right, not out of political pressures.

False Brethren

Jesus was tolerant of sinners but had had little tolerance for the Pharisees and doctors of the law. These were not entering the kingdom and would not allow others to enter either. Modern Pharisees perceive those who have deviated from their interpretation of doctrines as enemies, false teachers, or false prophets. There are, of course, some false teachers and false prophets. However, the apostle Paul's interpretation of who the real false brethren were is quite different from what is now popularly accepted. He warned against, "false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage." (Galatians 2:4). Those who use fear and intimidation to control others to conform to their beliefs should more often be categorized false teachers than those they so vehemently attack.

Hermeneutical Problems

Most of the hermeneutical (interpretation) systems that have been developed for the noble purpose of trying to prevent heresy or errors also destroy the liberty that is required for a believer to develop his own relationship with the Lord, and worship Him in Spirit and truth. Unfortunately, many of the remedies have too often proven more harmful than the diseases they were designed to treat. This is not a statement against the proper development and use of hermeneutics (hermeneutics is simply a system of interpretation). However, it is warning against preventing the development of the ability of individuals to read, understand, think and hear from God for themselves.

Both Catholic and Conservative Protestant hermeneutics have been guilty of yoking the people with fear rather than leading people to faith. Like the Pharisees who preceded them, some of the most conservative denominational leaders have erected barriers prohibiting individuals from receiving a fresh revelation or interpretation from the Scriptures. In fact, the very word "fresh revelation" is usually cursed by them with the accusations of men seeking to add to the Scriptures when this is not what is meant at all. The fresh revelation that is needed is an increased or deeper understanding of the Scriptures. Those who react so strongly to fresh revelation from the Scriptures have erred with one of the most terrible presumptions of all - the belief that they already know all that there is to know.

There are some outstanding hermeneutical principles that can help any sincere seeker of truth to stay on the path that leads to life. Unfortunately, these are often surrounded by many other principles that are designed to protect predetermined interpretations about many non-essential doctrines that are used to limit one's scope, vision, and understanding about almost all Biblical teachings.

There is obviously much more to be understood from the Bible than we now understand. Many aspects of conservative hermeneutics prevent, or at least greatly discourage, further exploration and understanding from the Scriptures. This is a tragic and devastating mistake. With all its different theological camps, the church has become like the proverbial blind men and the elephant. The one who found the leg was sure the elephant was like a tree. The one who found the tail thought that was ridiculous; the elephant was like a rope! The one who found its ear thought that the other two were both mistaken; the thing was like a great leaf. They were all partially right but totally wrong. They could never identify the elephant until they listened to each other and combined their understanding.

The wise psalmist declared, "The SUM of Thy word is truth." (Psalm 119:160). Each of us may have a part that is true but it is not the whole truth until it is properly fitted together with the other parts of the body of Christ. Understanding and interchanging with the different camps of Biblical interpretation can help us to receive the good without stumbling over the bad. Those who know the Spirit of Truth will have the faith in Him to do this. Unfortunately, those who are the most bound by fear, who need the interchange the most, will seldom have the confidence in the Holy Spirit to

lead them to the truth. Those who are bound by a control spirit will have more faith in the devil to deceive them than they will have in the Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth.

To declare that something is not Scriptural because it is not found in the Scriptures is a wrong application of the Scriptures. The Scriptures were given to free us to do whatever is not specifically banned, not to keep us from doing anything that is not mentioned in them. We must give believers the freedom to do what is not specifically banned in the New Testament, and then judge their fruit as to whether it was of God or not. This freedom does not mean that everything that we do is right; it simply means that in these matters we must seek the Lord individually for His will and His judgment. There are also times when the Lord would us rather use our own judgment than hear from Him about a matter. As we mature, He would rather us use our own judgment most of the time. If I tell my daughter to witness to one of her friends and she does it, it may please me to a degree, but not nearly as much as if she does it of her own accord.

The first century apostolic teams were not led around by the hand; they were sent by God. They used their own judgment most of the time because they had His mind. When the Lord needed to give them special direction, or to change their direction, He gave them a dream, vision, or prophetic word; but by the testimony of the Scriptures, that was in fact rare. The Lord wants all of His people to know His voice and to have a personal and intimate relationship with Him. All relationships are based on communication, but not all communication is directive. Many people become addicted to prophetic words, which leads to tragic misuse of the prophetic word. My toddler needs specific and almost continual guidance, but this is not true of my ten year old child. As we mature, we should need less guidance, not more. Having to hear from the Lord about every little decision is a sign of immaturity, not maturity. Prophets are not meant to be gurus. Neither are the Scriptures meant to be used as a horoscope. Even so, for there to be the freedom for believers to know the Lord for themselves, to develop their own relationship to Him, and to know His voice there must be the freedom for them to also make their own mistakes along the way.

Nothing is impossible with God. It would actually be a small thing for Him to have all Christians believing exactly alike about every doctrine. But true unity of heart will never be attained unless there is a choice not to be unified. Spiritual unity is not based on like doctrines; it is based on love—first for God and then for each other.

By God's design we presently "see through a glass darkly." Each is able to see but a part of the whole picture, and we will never see the whole picture until we learn to put our parts together. God's unity is not a unity of conformity but a unity of many diverse parts. True heart faith is evidenced by tolerance for those who are different, which is required if there is going to be a true unity of the heart.

Each Must Gather His own Manna

When the children of Israel were given manna from heaven, each household had to gather its own. The same holds true for gathering heavenly manna. We cannot rely solely upon the leaders for our spiritual food. This is not to belittle the importance of leaders and teachers who give themselves to the ministry of the Word. Just as the Levites were essential for ministering to the congregation of Israel, our leaders are essential today. But leaders cannot take on the duty of the individual or the individual household. There is a difference between the general teaching that should be provided by those devoted to the ministry of the Word, and the daily bread from heaven which must be gathered by each household.

How can an untrained person go to the Bible for a fresh word from heaven without falling into error or false teaching? This is one of the most important issues which has faced God's people during the four thousand years since the written Word was first given to man. One of Christianity's greatest struggles has been for the freedom of ordinary people to have access to and interpret the Scriptures for themselves. There is a God ordained ambiguity (having more than one meaning) preventing the establishment of an absolute law or method of Biblical interpretation. This ambiguity is designed to keep us dependent on the Holy Spirit to lead us to truth. That men would presume that they could develop a system, or principles, by which they can interpret the Scriptures is in itself an act of profound human arrogance. Such principles try to lay the burden of

interpretation on a science in place of the Holy Spirit. This, in and of itself, is a departure from the nature of true Christianity – a relationship with God. If such thing were possible, why was it not clearly laid out in the Scriptures, and why do the writers of Scripture themselves so often depart from these principles. Certainly there are some principles that can help us in our quest for Biblical truth; but there are no absolute laws or methods of Biblical interpretation. When we presume to substitute our own science for the Holy Spirit, we have by that fallen into serious error.

The Scriptures contain many paradoxes because the truth is found in the tension between the extremes. Only the Holy Spirit can enable us to discern such truth and keep us balanced between the extremes that divert us from the course. Does this not open the doors for a great deal of subjectivity in interpreting the Scriptures? Yes! And that is the point. True Christianity promotes an extraordinary liberty for the personal quest of God's truth, a liberty that is required if we are going to believe from our hearts and not just our minds.

The Highest Form of Unity

When we try to project absolute laws of interpretation, or doctrines, it may present a semblance of order and unity, but both the order and the unity will be external, not internal. As soon as the restraints are removed and we quickly see how much true order and unity there is; most of the time we will find chaos. As Martin Luther once quipped, "A spiritual man does not need a covenant (contact), and an unspiritual man cannot keep one!" When we try to get men to comply with our doctrines or commit themselves to our fellowship with human covenants and commitments, we have probably nullified their ability to come into a true unity or a true faith in the doctrine. We have also probably set ourselves up for a future church split.

It is true that we are living in a day of lawlessness. Truth, honor, and the belief that a man's word is his bond are becoming very hard to find. Even so, legalism is not the answer to lawlessness, it only feeds lawlessness, which is why Paul said, "the power of sin is the Law" and "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." (I Corinthians 15:56; II Corinthians 3:6).

When we apply the law to a person, we are only make the problem worse by highlighting it without giving the person the grace to overcome it –in this way we make sin manifest. If our constraints are strong enough, we may keep the person under control; but as soon as the restraints are removed he will be even worse. Using the law, we can lock up the criminal; but we cannot change him. As soon as he is released from our prison, he will continue to commit crime because he has not been changed.

Summary

The Lord is seeking truth in the inner man. When we are true in our hearts, we will be true when no one is looking and when no one could find out because truth is in our hearts. When we seek unity by putting external restraints on believers such as covenants and commitments that go beyond the New Covenant that we already have, we are trying to join men to ourselves instead of to Christ; and it will almost always end in a spiritual tragedy. Men may sincerely desire to keep such covenants when they make them, but all of us are going through the process of change. When we try to hold men to us beyond the time when they want to remain, they may stay longer because of their commitment, but they will ultimately leave. This creates a worse tear in the relationship, and probably more people will be affected by it, because of the guilt and bondage that has been imposed.

The Lord made it easy for His disciples to leave Him and difficult for them to stay. Why would we try to do it differently? Why would we want anyone committed to us if it is not in his heart? Only when a person is free to go, but he continues to stay, do we know that he is really with us in his heart.

When we bind men to ourselves with such covenants it may give us a little more security, but it is a false one. This is putting security in the strength of the bondage that we have brought someone into, not faith in the Lord and what He is building. To make a covenant is a serious matter, and it can bring us under condemnation if we break it. The New Covenant which we have in Christ, and our marriage covenants, are considered by some to be only covenants that are Biblical. I personally

believe that there is a little more liberty than that for making agreements. However, if we are joined to Christ, we are already joined to His Body, so why would we need an additional covenant to be joined to anyone spiritually? When we are compelled to make covenants with people, local congregations, or movements, it is a covenant that is outside of the New Testament; and both the New Testament and history testifies that it is likely to end badly. When Peter made the commitment that he would never deny the Lord, he could not even keep it through the night.

I have heard some very eloquent and moving messages about the beauty of David and Jonathan's covenant, but the tragic ending to that relationship is a poignant example of this point-Jonathan still died in the house of Saul although he had committed himself to the house of David. However, we must also appreciate David's heart to keep the covenant even with Jonathan's children. A noble soul will keep his agreements even when the other party does not. Why should we put people under unnecessary pressure to be joined to us or our work? This only reflects the shallowness of our leadership and the lack of the Lord's presence. When the Lord Jesus is lifted up, all men are going to be drawn to Him; and we do not need any other props. When we try to lift up ourselves or our works in His place, which is what we are doing when we pressure men to commit to us or to our work, they will inevitably become disappointed and be scattered, with great injury to all.

The first council in Jerusalem resulted in the most important declarations in church history, and they established a Biblical liberty for all Christians. After contending with the believers from the sect of the Pharisees, who had been compelling the young church to continue keeping the Law of Moses, the apostles and elders stated: "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials; that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell." (Acts 15:28-29).

Does this mean that we can do anything else, watch anything we want on television, look at pornography, gamble, etc.? Of course not! It means that we are all required to be led by the Holy Spirit and to obey Him. It means that we learn to walk by the "perfect law of love." If we love the Lord, our families, the church, and our neighbors, we would not do those things that could hurt them, or waste our time with such trivia when we could be spending it with them.

The control spirit, which is often manifested through human covenants or the use of guilt and pressure, is the manifestation of counterfeit spiritual authority. We only have true spiritual authority to the degree that Jesus lives within us. When He lives within us, we are acutely aware that He is building His church, and that He is quite able to do it perfectly. Therefore, we can relax. When we minister in true spiritual authority we are yoked with Him, which means He is going to be the one pulling the weight – His yoke really is easy and His burden is light. When we take it we really do find rest for our souls. We only have no strive when we are building in our own strength. Liberty is essential for a true Christian walk. Increasing liberty should always be our goals, but it must be understood that increasing liberty is relative to increasing maturity. I cannot give my three years old child nearly the liberty that I give my ten years old. Obviously, new believers generally need much more supervision and help than more mature Christians. The real issue is: are we promoting spiritual liberty and truth that will change men's hearts, that is not based on human constraints and pressures to get men to conform? We will never have true worship from the heart if we do not have freedom.

CHAPTER Eight - Our Greatest Power and Our Greatest Enemy

There are two ministries which go on continually before the throne of God: one is the ministry of intercession, the other is accusation. Jesus "lives to intercede" for His people. To the degree that we abide in Him, Jesus will use us to intercede; His church is to be a "house of prayer for all the peoples." Satan is called "the accuser of the brethren" and we are told that his ministry goes on "day and night before the throne of God" (see Revelation 12:10). To the degree that the enemy has access in our life he will use us to accuse and criticize. Like the two trees in the garden, we must all choose which of these ministries we are going to embrace.

We may ask how Satan could continue to accuse the saints before God if he has been thrown out of heaven and no longer has access to the throne? The answer is that Satan's uses the saints, who do have access to the throne, to do this diabolical work for him. Satan is called by many titles but certainly his most effective guise has been "the accuser of the brethren." This title was given to Satan because of his effectiveness in getting brother to turn against brother. Causing division is his specialty. Satan's greatest victory over the Church is turning the brethren against each other; accusation has been his most effective and deadly tool in destroying the light, the power and the witness of the body of Christ.

The greatest threat to Satan's domain is the unity of the church. The devil knows very well the authority Jesus has given to any two that will agree. He knows that with government between just two saints the Father will give them what they ask. He understands that one saint can put a thousand to flight but two of them can put ten thousand to flight. Unity does not just increase our spiritual authority – it multiplies it exponentially.

Ironically, the access the accuser has to most of us it through our insecurity, which drives us to become territorial. The insecure are threatened by anything which they cannot control. We may use doctrines or a feigned noble determination to protect the truth or the sheep, but I have never witnessed a division in the church which was not rooted in territorial preservation. The resulting divisions that we cause while trying to protect our domains in fact cuts off our true spiritual authority and anointing. This ultimately results in our losing the very thing we are trying so desperately to preserve. It is an incontrovertible law of the spirit, if you seek to save your life you will lose it. If you will lose your life for the Lord's sake you will find it. Isaiah addressed this issue most succinctly in chapter 58. "Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; and your righteousness will go before you; the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry, and He will say, "Here I am." If you remove the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness." (verses 8-9).

Do you need more light in your life? Do you wonder why recovery and healing do not come? Why do troubles tend to follow you more than the glory of the Lord? You call to the Lord but He does not answer; you even cry out to Him but cannot find Him. The reason for this is almost always the same – we have a yoke in our midst called "the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness" – which is a critical spirit. He promised through Isaiah that our lives could radically change when we remove that yoke. As the wise Solomon observed: "But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble." (Proverbs 4:18-19).

If we are walking in righteousness we will be walking in increasing light. It is true that those who stumble around in the dark seldom know the reason for that darkness or they would not be in it. The critical person is usually critical of everyone but himself. As the Lord stated, he is so busy looking for specks in the eyes of his brothers that he cannot see the big log in his own eye, which is the reason for the blindness. When we criticize another brother or sister, we are actually saying that God's workmanship does not meet up to our standards, that we could have done it better. Which one of us can even make ourselves into what we should be? If we cannot even make ourselves how will we make someone else? When we criticize someone else's children, who will take offense? The parents! This is no less true with God. When we judge one of His people we are really judging Him. When we judge one of the His leaders we are really judging His leadership; we are by that saying that He does not know what He is doing with the leadership He is providing. . . .

Such grumbling and complaining is the same problem that kept the first generation of the children of Israel from possessing their promised land. Their grumbling caused them to spend their entire life wandering in dry places. This is the chief reason why so many Christians do not walk in the promises of God; instead they spend their lives in the wilderness going around the same mountains (problems) over and over again. As we have been warned: "Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver,

who is able to save and to destroy. [When we judge the law we judge the Law-giver.] Who are you to judge another?" (James 4:11-12).

When we "point the finger" to criticize we yoke ourselves. The Lord warned us: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." (Matthew 7:1-2).

The Spirit of Poverty

I once visited a state that was under the most powerful spirit of poverty I have witnessed in this country. One characteristic which stood out concerning the nature of the people there was how they would scorn and criticize the wealthy, or anyone who was just doing well. By this these people had yoked themselves with their own judgments so that they could not be blessed.

We may sometimes be abased, and sometimes we need to abound. The apostle Paul even claimed to have gone hungry at times, and he sternly warned us to be content if we just have food and covering (see I Timothy 6:8). Even so, if I am to be abased I want to do it in submission to God and to what He is trying to work in my life, not in submission to an evil spirit of poverty. I certainly do not want to be yoked to poverty because of my own judgments of others.

In that state many of the pastors I met had actually yoked themselves and their congregations to poverty by criticizing how other men of God took up offerings. Because of their judgments they could not even take up a Biblical offering without feeling guilt. As they had sown suspicion about those who spent too much time taking up offerings, their own people began to suspect them if they took any time. As their judgments came back upon them they only knew darkness and unanswered prayer with regard to their needs. What is true with regard to finances can also be true with regard to spiritual gifts. I met in that state many who had significant mantles of spiritual authority, who should have had national or international influence in the church, but spent their lives ministering with little fruit to shrinking churches.

Sometimes our crowds will shrink because we are doing the right thing, just as the Lord's own departed when He preached things hard for them to receive, but this was not the case with these men. They had judged and criticized the ministries of others who were gaining influence and had thereby yoked themselves. God could not give them the platform which would have produced the fruit their anointing and authority should have produced. Our criticisms will bring us to poverty. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit" (Proverbs 18:21).

Criticism is one of the ultimate manifestations of pride because it assumes superiority. Pride brings that which any rational human being should fear the most – God's resistance. "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). We would be better off having all of the demons in hell resisting us than we would be having God stand against us.

Truth Can Kill

Our criticisms can be rooted in true discernment. The ones we criticize may well be in error. These pastors who criticized the way others raised money through manipulation, hype and sometimes outright deception, were accurate. We must walk in discernment, and the apostle made this plain, saying, "do we not judge those who are within the church?" The issue is how we deal with what we discern: are we going to use it to accuse or to intercede? Which ministry are we going to be a part of? How we deal with discernment can determine the outcome of our own spiritual lives. "A worthless person, a wicked man, walks with a perverse mouth; He winks with his eyes, he shuffles his feet, he points with his fingers; Perversity is in the heart, he devises evil continually; he sows discord. Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; suddenly he shall be broken without remedy." (Proverbs 6:12-15).

The very last thing the Lord indicated that we ever want to be is a stumbling block; it would be better for us to not even be born that to case even one of His little ones to stumble. In Matthew chapter 18, He gave clear instructions about how we are to deal with a brother who is in sin. He did this to keep us from becoming stumbling blocks. First, we go to him in private. Only after he has rejected our counsel do we go to him with another brother. Only after he has rejected both should

we ever go before the rest of the church with the issue. If we do not follow this pattern we will be in jeopardy of becoming the last thing we ever want to become: a person who has caused one, for whom our Lord gave His own life, to stumble.

I have heard numerous excuses for not following Matthew 18 in bringing correction. A popular one is: "I knew they would not listen to me." I have also heard the excuse, "If they have a public ministry we have a right to expose them publicly." This is quite preposterous because every ministry is public, at least to a degree. Who determines the degree to which it has become public that frees us from compliance with God's Word? The Lord gave no such conditions. Those who take such liberties with the clear commandments given by Jesus Himself are by this claiming to have authority to add to the Word of God. If a man we believe is in sin has a large ministry and is inaccessible to us, we can conclude that we must not be the one called to bring the judgment. In such a case, we should not accuse - we should intercede. The Lord is able to judge His own house and He is able to make a way for us if we are the ones He wants to use. If He does not make a way for us, we can trust Him to do it in His own time. Again, this is to protect us from coming under a judgment that is more severe than the brother who is in sin.

If we have not followed the Lord's prescribed manner for dealing with a brother who is in sin, we have absolutely no right to talk about it to anyone else, much less to go public with it. It should not even be shared to get another's opinion on the matter. What we may call getting someone else's opinion, God calls gossip! He is not fooled and we will pay the price for such indiscretions. His commandment was to first go to the person in private. Only after we have done that should we walk to another person, and then only for the purpose of going to help the one in sin. Our goal must always be to deliver the brother out of his sin, not just to expose him. Paul warned, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted." (Galatians 6:1).

Love Covers

Let us not succumb to pettiness in our challenges concerning another's sin. "Love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8). The majority of us still have a few hundred things wrong in our own lives that the Lord is not finished with. He is usually dealing with one or two of them at a time because that is all we can handle. It is one of Satan's strategies to try and distract us into trying to deal with the other three hundred problems we have, resulting in frustration and defeat.

Matthew 18 was not given to us to use as a club for letting our brother know how he offended us. If we have love we will cover most of those unless it is bringing unnecessary injury to our brother. We must use this Scripture, and indeed all Scripture, in love, not out of self-preservation or in retaliation.

Of course, the Lord Jesus Himself is our perfect model. When He corrected the seven churches in Revelation, He gave us a perfect model for bringing correction in the church. He first praised each church and highlighted what they were doing right. He then straightforwardly addressed their problems. Incredibly, He even gave Jezebel an opportunity to repent! He then gave each church a wonderful promise of reward for overcoming their problems. The Lord never changes. When He brings correction today it always comes wrapped in encouragement, hope and promises.

The "accuser of the brethren" is also trying to bring correction to the church. His methods and his goals are obviously quite different. Jesus encouraged and gives hope; Satan condemns and tries to impart hopelessness. Jesus builds one up so that they can handle the correction. Satan tears you down trying to get you to quit. Jesus loves us and wants to bring us to the highest place that He can. Satan's goal is destruction.

One of the more remarkable phenomenon of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements has been the inability of those inclined to spiritual gifts and experiences to discern the spirits. There seems to be the least discernment of the most deadly enemy spirit of all - the accuser of the brethren! Could it be that our judgment against those who do not have the baptism, or other spiritual experiences like ours, have yoked us with an inability to discern the spirits? Even without the spiritual gift of discernment, James gave us clear guidelines for discerning the source of wisdom,

which if we had heeded would have preserved the church from some of her most humiliating failures:

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (James 3:13-18).

We are saved by grace and we need all of the grace that we can get to make it through this life. If we want to receive grace, we had better learn to give grace because we are going to reap what we sow. If we expect to receive mercy, we had better start sowing mercy, and most of us are going to need all of the mercy we can get. The very last thing that we want to do is come before the Lord on that day with our brother's blood on our hands. He warned, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment." But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, "Raca (Empty head)!" shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, "You fool!" shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison (bondage). Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny." (Matthew 5:21-26). The context of this warning is that, if we have been guilty of slandering a brother, we should forget about our offerings to the Lord until we have been reconciled to our brother. We often think that our sacrifices and offerings can compensate for such sins but they never will. We will stay in the prisons we make for ourselves with our judgments until we have paid the last cent, or until we are reconciled to the brother we slandered.

The Lord said that when He returned. He was going to judge between the sheep and the goats (see Matthew 25:31-46). Those who are judged to be sheep inherit the kingdom and eternal life. Those who are designated as goats are sent to eternal judgment. The separation was determined by how each group had treated the Lord, which was reflected in how they had treated his people. As John stated: "If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar, for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." (1 John 4:20). "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. We know love by this, that He laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:15-16).

One of the great tragedies of church history has been the way leaders of each move of God have become opposers and persecutors of succeeding moves. To date this trend has not failed. Numerous leaders have spent their lives serving faithfully and well, only to end as vessels for the accuser, who makes them a stumbling block for the next move.

The Lord is allowing this onslaught in order to purify His church, and to work humility into many of those He is about to release with increasing power and authority. He is also allowing the accuser to surface in the church so that He can cut his head off. The Lord will vindicate those who are falsely accused in a way that will put a holy and pure fear of the Lord in His people so that we will not continue to give dominion in our hearts to the accuser.

What is it that causes leaders of one move to become opposers of the next move? There are several facts involved, which we must understand and be delivered from or we will end up repeating the same error. We may think and say that we would never do this, but that is what everyone has thought and said who has ended up doing it. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12). The pride that causes us to assume we will not do it is one of the very factors that lead to our fall.

This problem actually precedes church history and goes all the way back to the very first two brothers born into this world. The older could not bear the younger because, as John observed. "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous." (I John 3:11-12). Each move of the Holy Spirit has resulted in the restoration of more light to the church. This is not new truth but truth that was lost by the church through the Dark Ages of her history. Regardless of what we call our opposition, a basic reason for most of it is jealousy. Those in leadership, or who have been faithful to the light they have for a time, cannot believe the Lord would use anyone but them for further restoration of His truth and purposes.

Men with natural leadership abilities are usually those who attain the greatest positions of influence in the church. These are not wimps, and it is difficult for them to give up leadership. Even so, if we lean on our natural leadership abilities, instead of simply obeying the Lord, we will almost certainly be doomed to the ultimate failure of becoming a stumbling block.

True spiritual leadership is rooted in the humility of servant-hood, not in natural abilities. The more the apostle Paul grew in true spiritual authority the more determined he became to "put no confidence in the flesh," but to "glory in his weaknesses." It is only those domains that we, ourselves, have established that we will have to protect. Those who truly have their authority established by God trust God to keep that which has been entrusted to them.

The only remedy leaders have to keep from falling to this terrible trap is to seek the humility and nature of John the Baptist. This man is one of the greatest types of true spiritual ministry. His whole purpose in this life was to prepare the way for Jesus, to point to Him, then to decrease as the greater One increased. John's joy was to see the bridegroom's joy.

True spiritual leaders must have the attitude of "spiritual" eunuchs. A eunuch's whole purpose was to prepare the bride for the king. It was not even possible for the eunuch to desire the bride, but his whole joy was in his king's joy. Jesus "emptied Himself and became of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant." So must all who would walk in true spiritual authority. When we use the ministry in order to make a reputation, to find those who will serve us and to be filled ourselves, we will not have the authority of Christ. It is not always the older generation of leadership that has been the stumbling block; the new generation has been just as guilty of causing the previous one to stumble! The very arrogance of presuming that we are the new generation (in contrast to the old) is rooted in a pride that God has to resist. This is a humiliating slap in the face to men and women who have given their lives to faithfully serving the Lord and His people.

Jesus did not ridicule John the Baptist for being a part of the old order – He honored him. Jesus even submitted Himself to John's ministry. This submission did not entail allowing John to control Him, but He acknowledged John and esteemed him and his work.

Why is it that abused children grow up to be abusers? Why is it that accused saints grow up to become accusers? The answer is the same for both. Abused children usually grow up judging their parents and determined not to be like them. So they become reactionary, which does not lead to grace but feeds and nurtures the bitterness - that ultimately results in their becoming just like their parents. Only humility, repentance and forgiveness will ever break that cycle. The sins of the parents will become the sins of the children until we receive the grace of the cross. God gives His grace to the humble – those who understand that they will be like their parents without His help.

There will be generation that will be persecuted like every one before it, but which will not go on to persecute the next move. This movement will not have become subject to the "pride of generations," assuming that all things will be concluded with them. This generation will have found the grace of the cross, having forgiven from the heart those who mistreated them. This generation will also perceive and even hope that their children, spiritual and natural, may go further in Christ than they went and will rejoice in it. They will give their lives to making the way of that generation as smooth as possible, and will then rejoice to decrease as that generation arises. They will be of the spirit of Elijah who will return the hearts of the fathers to the sons, and the hearts of the sons to the fathers.

Our ability to be such a generation, which prepares the way for the Lord and His ultimate purposes, will be determined by which of the two ministries we choose – accusation or intercession. Let us now remove the terribly yoke of “pointing the finger” from our midst and begin turning our criticisms in to intercession.

"Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery will speedily spring forth; and your righteousness will go before you; the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry, and He will say, “Here I am.” And the Lord will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail. And those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; and you will raise up the age-old foundations; and you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets in which to dwell." (Isaiah 58:8-9, 11-12).

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8

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