

Leadership and Servanthood

Joe Slater

God's perspective often conflicts with that of the world. For example, the world thinks of greatness as resulting from the exercise of authority over others; but Jesus said the great ones are servants, and the greatest is the slave of all (Mark 10:43, 44).

Self-centered, worldly attitudes conceive of leaders as those who set ambitious goals and then reach them by hook or by crook. By contrast, I like the way Jeff Myers put it: "Good leaders don't use others to reach their goals; they use their goals to reach others." Isn't that consistent with what Jesus said, as well as being consistent with the life He lived?

That isn't to say, of course, that Jesus didn't enlist the help of others in accomplishing His goals. He did. Men like the apostles, however, were not merely stepping stones to be used and then cast aside. Jesus reached out to them, then reached out to others through them.

John 6:38 expresses Jesus' goal: "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*" Jesus did not simply use other people to get what He wanted; rather, as He explains in the next two verses, helping others was part and parcel of His goal: "*This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day*" (6:39, 40).

The servant leadership set forth in Scripture seeks not to exalt self at the expense of others, but to help others even at the sacrifice of self. Jesus exemplified this model as He left the indescribable glories of Heaven,

lived in a common, working-class household, and finally went to the cross to suffer, bleed, and die for sinners. Paul likewise demonstrated godly leadership when he wrote, "*And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved*" (2 Corinthians 12:15). Yes, leaders are called to sacrifice even when their followers don't appreciate it.

Business, the church, and every other segment of society would be better off with servant-leaders such as the Bible describes, rather than those following worldly standards. Especially in the church, let us hold fast to God's pattern for leadership

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Warrior or Worrier?

A Christian who is not a native English-speaker recently attempted to praise someone by saying she was a spiritual warrior. Instead, he wrote that she was a great "worrier."

Christ wants us to be warriors in His kingdom rather than worldly worriers.

He wants us to do something constructive, rather than fret about everything.

Our Lord tells us to fight for the faith and allow Him to create new life in the lost, rather than drown in fright of bad things that might happen.

Paul barks out these orders: "Stay alert, stand firm in the faith, show courage, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13).

Remember, you can't fight and fret at the same time. You can't stay alert when you're worried about getting hurt. You can't stand firm when you squirm with each imagined discomfort. Strength comes from focus, fear disperses vision, and worry blinds one to God's power.

So what are you going to be: a warrior or a worrier?

Randal Matheny (via Walking with God)

THE WHOLE THING

"As for God, his way is perfect" (Psalm 18:30).

I once taught college English out of a book titled *The Whole Thing*. It was supposed to teach the student everything he needed to know about writing. It was good in theory, but it didn't work very well. The author made a few mistakes. He left important lessons out. Twenty years later, English has changed, and so have accepted practices in writing. The rules are different.

God has given us a textbook for life. In a way, it could be called *The Whole Thing*. The apostle Paul gives a list of those whom God has given the responsibility of imparting His textbook to others. They are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). Why did they need to teach it? "*For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: until we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*" (Ephesians 4:12, 13).

God's Word is divinely inspired. Because of the Bible, we know where we came from, who we are, and where we are going. It is food for our souls. Unto those who believe, it is the power of salvation. God will write its precepts on our hearts so it can be our light. It is the divine standard for our faith.

God has said there will be no other revelation to us until Jesus comes. Our Father has made no mistakes in writing it. He has not left out any important lessons. The rules, the perfect law of liberty, will never change. Woe to those who ignore it, for it is *The Whole Thing*, the only guide book for leading us to heaven.

--Donna Richmond-Wittlif (Denver, CO)