

Nowhere
23-2-4

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 10

How to Be a More Effective Leader

I. Introduction

- A. "Leaders are made, not born" -- so says the old proverb.
- B. Although some of the world's great leaders may have been born with natural leadership ability, one clear fact cannot be denied: No matter how much natural leadership ability you have been born with (or without), the skills of leadership can be learned and your effectiveness as a leader can improve if you are willing to work at it.
- C. Nowhere is this more true than in the Church of God, for we have both the true principles of leadership and God's Holy Spirit to help us apply those principles.

II. SPS

* This lecture will explain how to be a more effective leader.

III. Need

- A. Luke 12:32 -- God likens His people to sheep that need to be guided and led. They need care that is genuine and nurturing.
- B. Unless we leaders are effective, the brethren will not have a clear path to follow as we follow Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach, who in turn follows Christ.
- C. Hebrews 13:17 -- We ministers and leaders in the Church must give account of our leadership to Christ at His coming.

IV. What Is the Foundation of True Leadership?

Many qualities go into the making of a leader. He must have strength of character to command the respect of those he is leading. He must also have a measure of wisdom, knowledge and understanding in addition to a certain amount of natural ability. But the most important quality

or characteristic a leader in God's Church must have is genuine love for others.

- A. Love is the very basis of true Christianity. God's character is summed up in that single word (I John 4:16). That is the foundation upon which we must build in any kind of leadership training.
- B. I Corinthians 13:1-3 -- No matter how many gifts, talents, abilities or personal qualities we may possess, without love we are nothing.
- C. Without real Christian love as the foundation, any of our efforts to become more effective leaders would be self-centered -- selfish. Our efforts would be just so much vanity. We can truly help others only if our motivation is based on the kind of love God expects us to have.
- D. In this lecture, let's examine ourselves to be sure we're building on the solid, sure foundation of love for others.

V. Love the Brethren

- A. I John 2:9-10 -- Surely, we are in the second category described here, aren't we? None of us hates our brother -- or do we, in some cases? This word hates is translated from the same Greek word as "hate" in Luke 14:26.
- B. Luke 14:26 -- Notice, Christ said we must "hate" our parents and members of our own families. This word can, of course, have the meaning of "to love less" in a comparative sense.
- C. Genesis 29:30-31 -- This is another example of how God looks at this matter of hating someone. Nothing in the Bible indicates that Jacob hated Leah in the sense that we usually think of a person hating someone, but because of the way he treated Leah in favoring Rachel, God considered Jacob's feeling toward Leah as hatred.
- D. Do we sometimes hate our brother in the sense that we -- through our actions, words or attitudes -- love him less than we should? Some of us do. God says that any of us who are guilty of this are walking in darkness.

* [On the other hand, if we truly love our brother, there will be "none occasion of stumbling" in us. We won't offend any of our brothers and sisters and cause them to stumble as a result of our being inconsiderate, tactless, unkind, discourteous or unfriendly, no matter what the circumstances may be.

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- E. Romans 12:9 -- If we have the kind of love toward our brother God expects, it will be sincere and from the heart -- without dissimulation, which means without feigning or pretending. Do we have a foot-washing attitude all year long?

VI. Spend Time With the Brethren

To have this kind of genuine, sincere love for others, you'll have to spend time with and really get to know them as brethren.

A. Fellowship often.

Malachi 3:16-17 -- Those who speak "often one to another" are those whom God will remember when He begins to select those who will be spared from the coming time of tribulation upon the entire earth and be born into His Family at Christ's return.

B. Set the example in being hospitable.

I Peter 4:9 -- "Use hospitality one to another." This is a very important way to spend time with and get to know others. Paul said we should be "given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13). This should be one of our outstanding characteristics as Christians, and as the leaders in the local church, you should be setting the example for the rest of the brethren in this regard.

C. Show interest in others.

It is enjoyable to have others over for dinner from time to time, as circumstances and your finances permit, but an evening of cards (or some other game) and conversation, with simple refreshments, can be just as enjoyable and profitable.

Learn to make others feel at ease and relaxed in your home by showing a real interest in them -- in their background, their experiences, their interests. You can get to know them best by being a good listener and, if they are a little reticent, by asking them questions to encourage them to talk.

D. Invite newer members and others, not just close friends.

While it is normal and right for you to want to entertain your close friends, you should be sure to have others, such as newer members and those who don't usually get invited out often, over to your home often, also.

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How often you have others over to your home will be up to each of you to determine in view of your own individual circumstances, but be sure to use wisdom and balance. Don't overdo it, and don't give others the impression that you are having them over to "help" them or because you are "supposed" to do this. This is just an area of Christian life in which all of you as leaders should be setting the example.

E. Glorify God.

John 15:8-17 -- It is very pleasing for our Father in heaven to look down and see His people visiting together and sharing their lives with each other. He is glorified by our fruits, and the most important of these, as emphasized right here in this chapter (verses 9, 12, 17), is love for our brethren. We get a chance to show this love and grow in it by speaking "often one to another" -- by having others over to our homes and by spending time with them at services, Bible studies and at other Church functions.

VII. Bolster and Encourage Each Other As Brethren

- A. Hebrews 10:25 -- This scripture is specifically referring to assembling for Sabbath services or other official Church meetings, but the principle stated here certainly applies to us getting together as individuals. It is important for us to spend time with each other, and "so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

As this age waxes more violent and becomes more perilous, those of us who are striving to obey God and serve Him "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Philippians 2:15) need, as never before, to cultivate a real closeness among ourselves as brethren. We need to bolster, encourage and exhort each other in a positive, friendly, helpful way.

- B. I Corinthians 12:13-14 -- We are all "one body," and, as Benjamin Franklin told his fellow signers of the Declaration of Independence, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."

We as a group have been called to carry out the most awesome, gigantic commission ever given to any group of people. And for faithfully doing so, we will soon be (hated) of all nations. We must "hang together" -- we must work together and help each other -- if we are going to finish this Work!

VIII. Give Others the Benefit of the Doubt

In order to have the right kind of esprit de corps among ourselves as brethren, and in order to be sincerely pulling for each other in every circumstance, we must learn to give the other person the benefit of the doubt. We must learn to accept people for what they are without judging and criticizing.

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A. God is our lawgiver and judge.



James 4:11-12 -- It is to God that our brother is accountable -- not to us. It isn't our place to judge others -- to impute motives and draw conclusions in our own minds about other people and what they should or should not be doing.

It is easy -- and in fact, natural -- to evaluate and critically analyze others, but it is wrong. This directly works against and tears down the godly love for others that we should be building into our character through God's Spirit. We need to recognize and put out such thoughts whenever we find ourselves mentally judging and criticizing others.

B. Look for the good in others.

Philippians 4:8 -- Think on these things. Look for the good in others. Learn to automatically think the best instead of the worst.

C. Practice godly love.

I Corinthians 13:4-7 -- This is how godly love behaves. But human nature wants to do just the opposite. Unless you are consciously trying to have this kind of love toward others and going to God continually for it, you won't have it.

D. Be tenderhearted.

Ephesians 4:29-32 -- We need to be kind, thoughtful and tenderhearted in our dealings with others. This is especially true for those of you who have a position of responsibility in which you must at times direct other people in some way (e.g., ushering or as the one in charge of a committee for a social).

Always be considerate, tactful and kind, even in the face of a wrong attitude. Maintain an attitude of forgiveness toward others and be willing to overlook their faults. Unless we forgive others, we ourselves can't expect forgiveness from God (Matthew 6:14-15).

IX. Develop a Family Comradery Among Yourselves

A. Promote unity.

Sincerely rejoice, from the heart, when one of your brothers in God's Church receives special blessings or recognition in some way. On the other hand, show empathy for those who suffer in any way. Express care and concern for brethren in trials, and pray for God's blessing upon them. This promotes unity and love in God's spiritual Family.

I Corinthians 12:26 -- Practice seeing God's Church as the spiritual Family of God, which it is, and develop a real concern for every individual member of that Family.

B. Esteem others better than ourselves.

Philippians 2:3-5 -- We must put on the very mind and attitude of Christ, esteeming others better than ourselves. Don't just rejoice in your own blessings (verse 4), but rejoice sincerely when others are blessed (Romans 12:15).

C. Pray for each other.

You should help each other and pray for each other. You don't have to confess your sins to each other, but you will find that it often helps to admit your faults and weaknesses to others and to ask them to pray with you about a particular problem.

X. Develop a Spirit of Selfless Service

A. Give of yourself to others.

After making certain that you are building on the foundation of genuine godly love for others, a second basic key to remember is that true leadership requires a spirit of service.

Matthew 20:25-28 -- Christ pointed out to the 12 disciples, who were at that time carnal and were striving among themselves, that any who would be "great" should become a "minister" -- a servant. He held up His own example of coming to minister unto others by giving His life rather than to be served.

I John 3:16-18 -- We ought also to have this attitude of being willing to lay down our lives for the brethren -- literally, if necessary, but just as importantly, in giving of our life, which is our time and energy, in serving others. We must demonstrate our love for the brethren by our deeds.

James 1:27 -- This is "pure religion." This is an important way in which you can serve -- by making it a point to visit widows, the sick and others who may be lonesome at times.

Another helpful way to serve is to include some of the "fatherless" in some of your family activities. The children of widows and of women who are separated from their husbands need the masculine influence you can provide, as well as the opportunity of being with other children. If various men would help from time to time with these "fatherless" children, no one man would be overburdened.

B. Be sure your motivation for service is right.

No matter how much you serve, unless your attitude and motivation is right, you aren't pleasing God. Examine your own motivation. Be willing to admit that it hasn't always been completely pure and honorable -- that there has been a lot of self involved. This is another aspect of human nature at work. You can overcome it only if you recognize it, repent of it and ask God to give you the right motivation, which is a sincere desire to help others and see them benefit.

Acts 20:35 -- It truly is more blessed to give than to receive, and if your attitude is right, you'll experience the satisfaction and joy that comes only from giving -- from serving and helping others.

Matthew 6:1-4 -- This should be our approach in serving. We don't have to be secretive, but neither should we be concerned about whether anyone else knows about it. Verse 3 -- As applied to the Body of Christ, this means you shouldn't be telling another member about the way in which you serve just for the sake of letting it be known. If you do, you already have your reward.

I Timothy 5:25 -- God says that most good works are obvious anyway, and those that are not cannot be hidden. The Pharisees blew their trumpet to get attention and then dropped their coin. We tend to drop our coin and then blow our horn. Don't. If it should be known, it will be.

XI. Lead by Your Example

A leader is one who sets the pace -- who lives the example -- for others to follow and emulate. We have seen two basic keys that will help you be more effective leaders in the local church. If you use these keys, you

will be setting the example as leaders for the rest of the congregation to follow.

- 1 First, really get to know the brethren and build into your character genuine, godly love for all of them.
- 2 develop a spirit of selfless service. You'll help the brethren through your example, and you'll be richly rewarded now by the joy and satisfaction that comes from loving and serving others. More important, you'll be rewarded, according to your works, in God's Kingdom.

XII. What About the Other Qualities of Leadership?

It should be obvious that this lecture has not exhaustively covered all aspects of leadership. The reason is twofold: 1) Many other aspects of leadership will be covered in other lectures in this series. 2) This course is not trying to duplicate what the many profitable books on leadership, available at libraries and bookstores, say on the subject.

But it most assuredly is giving the important spiritual components of leadership not available anywhere else -- the missing dimension in leadership that this world doesn't recognize.

This truth is indeed precious.

XIII. Conclusion

Although some people are born with great natural ability, nonetheless we all can improve our leadership skills with work and the Spirit of Jesus Christ living in us. Hence, the saying that "leaders are made, not born" should be no more true than it is among us, the leaders of God's Church now, who are being made in the very image of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.