

## Leaders & Disciples

*Prayer*

What is a Leader?

A leader is an individual who shows the way and personally goes the way he or she shows. In short, they teach and guide others.

What is a Disciple?

A disciple is one who follows the discipline of the teacher

Which are you?

My friends as children of God this morning if you answered anything other than **both** you misunderstand God's calling on your life!

I am going to give you the secret to great leadership this morning. Listen closely to this next sentence. **"You can never be an effective leader until you are an effective disciple."**

Does Jesus lead your life this morning? If he isn't leading your life, then you aren't a disciple of Christ.

Jesus picked men from various occupations and pulled them under his wing, he taught them the truth of the Gospel, he built relationship with them. These men he called his disciples. He called them disciples because he expected them to follow his teachings.

Now when we look at the disciples in the New Testament, do we see followers or do we see leaders?

The answer should be: "YES"

When a person studies a subject, let's say that subject is Math, he or she studies the discipline of mathematics. Let's take our hypothetical disciple of mathematics now and move things along. This young man has just completed his B.Math. He has studied mathematics for four years in university.

Is he now a Disciple or Teacher?

If he is teaching math to school aged children as his new job, is he not both a disciple and a teacher? Is he not a disciple as he follows the discipline he has learned - and a teacher / leader because he is sharing what he has learned?

As a Pastor am I not a disciple?

Yes, I follow the discipline and teachings of the master.

As a member of this congregation are you learning from the teaching of the master as I relate them to you?

When you relate these teachings to others are you not both a disciple of the teachings of Jesus and a teacher of others?

My friends, my point is that in our culture we have corrupted what being a leader really means. If I decided to rest on my laurels now and quit taking bible classes or if I figured that I had enough understanding of the Word of God that I didn't need to learn anymore, If I become content with the level of learning, education, understanding that I have of God, can I really claim to be a leader any longer?

I will have studied, I will have attained a level of understanding and a proficiency just like the young man who achieved his B.Math, but I have chosen to stop learning...

If I am leading and I no longer pursue the discipline and understanding of my field, what will the message to my students be? I am essentially leading them to stop learning.

I want you to remember the next sentence I am going to say... The Person IS the message. What we do speaks a lot louder than what we say.

Each and every day I learn something new about God. I will try to do this until I go to be with him.

WHY?

Because the scripture tells us that without a PROGRESSIVE vision the people dwell aimlessly (Some versions say perish, others say cast off restraint) (CF. Prov. 29:18)

Progressive means moving forward.

To be an effective leader, I first had to be teachable.

When I achieved my Masters degree in martial arts I was quite proud of that accomplishment. It took me 14 years to achieve. Not only was I proud, but I had whole classes of black belt students. When I would walk into the school, the class would actually stop and bow towards me as a group. It would be so easy were I still insecure at this point to get a big head. To allow my ego to take me to a bad place, but I had a teacher... Grand Master Jhoon Rhee. This 70 year old little man could punch a Vancouver yellow pages phone book in half. That's about 4"

But he showed me the joy in lifting others up; building up their confidence and helping them achieve their success. I had learned the discipline of rejoicing in the success of my students, instead of just my own. Now matter what I had achieved, I still followed the discipline of my teacher. And I continued to learn.

Now here is something that you may not know. When I fought with black belts and trained individuals, I knew exactly what to expect as I saw my own techniques tossed back at me... It was the brand new students off the street who had something new to teach...

Friends, the lesson is we can learn new things from anyone, especially those who don't think like we do.

To sum up:

- We need to be lifelong learners
- We cannot be effective leaders without also being effective followers at the same time
- A disciple practices the discipline of the teacher

Okay so what is the difference between a boss and a leader?

A boss thinks of themselves above those they are working with.  
A boss tells people what to do

A leader wants others to succeed even their own ability and position  
A leader enables others to do things

Okay so practical example...

- A leader studies the Word of God and is a disciple of Christ and others teachings
- A leader relates those studies, in context, with life experience to their disciples
- A leader tries to live up to what he or she is saying
- A disciple listens to what is said and places it into context in the Word of God
- A disciple relates those studies in context to their own life experience and then shares that experience with others
- A disciple then attempts to live up to what he or she is saying

At what point did the leader become the disciple?  
At what point did the disciple become the leader?

Disciples are really people training to be leaders, by being leaders.

Here's the rub, effective leaders are disciples and effective disciples are leaders. To put this simply, they are two sides of the same person. At some points you must be a leader. At other points you must be a follower. In some instances you are both at the same time!

Let's get practical for a minute.

...Say we have an IT Manager who went to school and learned business administration. Let's set the stage that this IT manager is very competent at their job. This person knows how to get things done and understands the bottom line of the project. Now this IT manager has in their team:

- A Hardware Specialist
- A Business Analyst
- A Systems Analyst
- A Financial Analyst
- A Programmer
- A Flight Controller (Seconded)

The manager has a meeting about a new project and says that they need to build a new Air Traffic Control System. The manager has some understanding of the needs of the project. Let's examine two scenarios.

Scenario 1)

- The Manager orders the hardware he thinks will do the job
- The Manager writes down the requirements that the Airport Business is requesting
- The Manager writes the technical system specifications to build the system
- The Manager determines ROI and CBA of the project and prepares the business case
- The Manager has studied the basic programming language in an excel spreadsheet so attempts to write the application.

What is the outcome in our example?

- The Manager has either not purchased the hardware that will do the job or has overspent on what is required to do the job
- The manager misses some of the business requirements because he has never been formally trained
- The programmer and hardware gal are frustrated because they don't understand the requirements of the technical specifications as they are not detailed enough
- The manager does ROI and CBA quite well, but the financial analyst has been on coffee for 2 weeks
- The application is not stable and doesn't meet the needs of the business

- Scenario 2)
- The manager delegates to the hardware gal the task of performing a needs analysis for the equipment that is needed based upon the budget constraints he has
- The manager delegates the business requirements to the business analyst and the BA meets with the flight controller. The manager steps back to manage the scope of the project instead
- The manager has the business analyst have a meeting with the systems analyst and hardware specialist to make sure they are on the same page
- The financial analyst handles the finance
- The programmer codes a stable application

What is the lesson is all of this detail...

It doesn't matter what you are expected to accomplish, a real leader recognizes and utilizes the strengths of those around them. Instead of controlling everything themselves, they enable others to be successful...

Now you might say: "That is a weird sermon pastor, how does any of that relate?"

As Christians when we minister to those around us and make disciples, it is NOT our job to do everything for them, It is our job to help them get to where they need to be. To love them and encourage them on the journey

Here is what God's word says:

Hebrews 13:17 NIV

*Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.*

What is this saying to us today?

- 1) We need to trust our leaders
- 2) We need to follow our leaders
- 3) We need to follow our leaders in such a way that we are a joy for them to work with.
- 4) As a disciple, you are setting the precedent for your own leadership. It's more than a bit like the Golden Rule. Do unto others as you would have done unto you. (CF. Matt 7:12)

Now a word of caution... Leaders persuade, encourage, build up and help. A leader should try to bring people onside and work with them. Authority has often been abused in the church. As unfortunate as that is it is true.

My friends, the authority of office is granted. For example, as pastor the congregation as a whole has granted me the mandate to act as the spiritual leader / visionary etc. within this church. Jesus Christ has given me the authority to walk this path as his steward over his church. In this capacity, I have been given the privilege to select individuals to be trained and to exercise their ministry within the church. As a priest I am a leader of a congregation of believers. You here and those away as well as 650+ individuals online (internet), are in that congregation. That is an awesome responsibility. In this role, I must also be a disciple of Jesus. Can you see how every single one of us is accountable, first to Jesus who is the ultimate authority and second to those placed into the role of leader?

Now I want to state here and now, that through the authority of the Holy Spirit and the leading of God that I can commission individuals into leadership. God has called me and instructed me to do this. In fact, that is why I am here.

Friends as a Pastor, just like on Facebook, I can create followers... But scripturally, I find it far more appropriate to commission and equip other leaders.

This is how I see our church... You are ALL priests before the Lord. The Lord has placed me here as your Lead priest and in that capacity; I am ultimately responsible to our great high priest and savior Jesus Christ to whom I must give account.

But you're not off the hook... Since in this Godly perspective, every person in this place is a leader, disciple and is accountable.

Here is the key to Christian leadership... God has blessed me with this insight, thank you Jesus and it seems to be missing in many churches in our culture. Here is the revelation of the Lord...

God has placed leaders in his church not for them to glorify themselves, to seek the best seats like the Pharisees, but rather to show by example how a real leader takes on the role of disciple willingly. In that role they are called to get underneath that individual and lift them up to God. As a leader your heart should be to see the other succeed. We are instructed to love the other as you love yourself. (cf. John 13:34) Ultimately, we are to love each other as he has loved us. (cf. John 13:34,35)

Now what did our great high priest command us to do?

He said in Matthew 28:19,20 NIV: *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

In Mark 16:15-18 NIV: *"He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my*

*name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well”*

Friends, every person in this place this morning is here because God has placed a calling on your life. It is up to you to choose what you will do with the talents God gave you...

Remember the parable of the talents? Will you bury them or will you do what God has called you to do?

Now does God expect his disciples / leaders to be fully equipped immediately to share his gospel... The answer is “eventually”. We are told to be instant in season and out of season. (cf. 2 Timothy 4:2)

Let’s place Christianity into context. The church has never been meant to be an entertainment venue. It was created to fulfill a purpose.

- 1) We hear the word of the Lord and the Holy Spirit draws us to Christ
- 2) We become Disciples of Christ and his teachings and get filled with the Holy Spirit
- 3) The Holy Spirit begins his restorative work to bring about the likeness of Christ within us
- 4) We reach a level of maturity in Christ where we are commissioned and empowered for ministry. This point is called baptism in the Holy Spirit
- 5) We actively fulfill the role, that we are called to fulfill in the body of Christ
- 6) God not us... God builds our ministry Line upon line and precept upon precept. (cf. Isaiah 28:10) God starts us with the little things and then gives us more as we are faithful, grow and become more equipped for him to use us. (cf. Luke 16:10)
- 7) God rewards our obedience to his will with power and authority in him

God doesn’t give out his power to those who are not ready for it. The Holy Spirit prepares our hearts to receive his gifts.

So as you are becoming leaders, what advice have we been given? Well... In my opinion, here in North America, we must watch out for the sin of pride, it is the most damaging to the North American churches. The worldly culture around us has caused this... Friends, we all need to resist this.

Conclusion

Proverbs 16:19 NKJV

*“Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.”*

Humility is held in contempt by the world and those of worldly intent, but it is what we are called to. We are called into leadership and we are to be humble disciples, knowing where our authority comes from. Worldly ways and ego make God an enemy, but when we do things his way and we have faith in him, he calls us friends!

### **Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly**

Jesus was our example and he was humble. Friends, this morning, I remember how I felt. God in his grace gave me a sense of the sin in my life. I was broken and brought to a place of repentance. My self-importance, my self-image was broken under the weight of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus. Many here today will know what I mean when I say that I have been humbled under the sense of his righteousness. I became aware that no matter who I was or what I did, I could not save myself. I came to realize that I had to completely trust in him for my salvation.

I will boast in Jesus; as he is the one who has made me intelligent. I thank him because I was smart enough to realize that everything I was, am and will be is under the control and the free grace of God. When I clearly saw this, I became resigned to his will, I bear whatever problems he brings into my life and do my best not to murmur or complain. He has taught me to think better of others than myself.

I have gone from proud to meek when I realized where I fit in God's plan. I am his disciple. He has commissioned me. I no longer work for myself, but for his purpose. I would rather be a follower of Jesus and have little, that all the treasures this world has to offer.

He has made my heart whole, he has redefined whom I am and I am content in him.

As your pastor this morning it is the cry of my heart that you have an epiphany or revelation if you will about your life. I want for each of you what he has done for me. He has made me complete. He has made me whole. He has made me a son. He has made me a joint heir. He has made me a special treasure.

Did you notice what I said? "HE" not "I"

This lesson that he has taught me. It is one of lessons he has directed and empowered me to share with you...

*Prayer*