



Chapter 1 Gentile styled leadership doesn't work

This struggle over how leadership will be handled is nothing new, in fact it is as old as the entrance of the fallen nature into the flesh of man. Leadership was meant to be a joyful expression of caring for the people of God, but it tends to become, with the passage of time, a tendency to manipulate, control, and intimidate followers into doing what leaders desire them to do, of course always under the auspices of wanting to properly shepherd the flock of God.

The following words of Christ, as far as I can tell, form the main body of thinking on this subject, that the apostles did little more than amplify. Whatever they wrote was simply Holy Spirit amplification of this passage. This passage provides the spirit or attitude that is to be behind the very idea of leadership. If this spirit is not evident and obvious in all Church leadership then their leadership is seriously in question, and following them may be injurious to your spiritual health. I'm going to make a bold statement that the remainder of this study will discuss and amplify and it is this: If your leaders do not clearly manifest the humble gracious spirit of a servant then you may have someone other than God's choice of leadership for you. Because I am a man of like passions, I grieve over how this statement has applied to me, and those who experienced my leadership in ways that were clearly not in alignment with the following passage.

Matthew 20:20 (NKJV) Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. 21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." 22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." 23 So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father." 24 And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; 28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The Danger with Power

Lord John Edward Emerich Acton was one of the most important British historians of the early 20th century and was quoted as saying "*Power tends to corrupt; absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely*"

Without a doubt one of the most self deceptive and carnality stimulating dimensions of life is the dimension of having power over other's lives. When we possess power we more quickly tend to deny our tendency to be deceived in our motivations for the use of that power than in any other area of life. How often have we seen men and women who have spoken of one purpose for their authority, but the reality was ultimately very different.

Steve Brown in his book *“Born Free,”* comments on his visit to the White House during President's Nixon's time in office. His friend Bill Lukash, who was then President's Nixon's physician, took him to see the Oval Office. While they were there he invited Steve to pick up the phone in his office and make a call anywhere in the world. Steve tried to resist the offer, but finally gave in and called his home. His following comments are interesting in light of our discussion of the use of authority:

”Finally, Bill took me to his own office. He pushed the phone over to me and said, Steve, you can call any place in the world on this phone. Just pick it up and the White House operator will instantly put you in touch with anyone you want to talk to—anywhere. Want to try?

And I said, No, Bill, but it is interesting.

But he insisted, so I called Anna. And that's when I lost it. I said, Anna, you're not gonna believe where I'm calling you from!

That day I learned why a man could sell his soul in the White House. You think to yourself, *This is the seat of the most awesome power in the universe. From here decisions are made that change the course of history. This is where history resides.*

I realized that, if I were to get a job in the White House, I would probably do anything to hold onto the **power** it represents.”

For those who have never held a position of authority over the life of another it is hard to imagine the intoxication that comes with being able to exercise that power. To be able to control others just by virtue of your position and title is an awesome and addictive thing. The question we must explore, when we come to the New Testament is, *“What kind of authority and what limitations, if any, are there to that authority in the lives of those who are called to lead the body of Christ?”* How similar is the use of New Testament authority to that expressed in the world?

CEO or CEG?

Are New Testament shepherds the basic equivalent to CEO's—Chief Executive Officers, in the corporations of this world? Does the world's exercise of authority form the appropriate model for the Church? Or are we too look somewhere else, and for something different, for our model? Something more like a CEG—Chief Example of Grace, or CES—Chief Example of a Servant?

Jesus' words are piercing. They kind of get inside your heart and bounce around trying to find a shelf to come to rest on, but they just don't seem to find a place to settle because it's as though our hearts don't really have a compartment for these words, as we wonder if we have ever seen this kind of authority. Are we more used to seeing the Gentile kind?

Is it possible that whatever Jesus is talking about is so radically different from any other pattern in the world that we are almost incapable of comprehending it by comparison to what we are used to seeing?

What CEO do you know who would allow his stock clerk to fire him? Is that a fair comparison to Jesus allowing a few non-descript Roman soldiers to nail Him, the Lord of Glory, to a despicable cross? How does that kind of use of authority translate over into the local Church? I don't know about you, but this is a pretty serious matter to ponder.

Before we dismiss Jesus' words, with the notion that He is saying nothing more than that He doesn't want the leadership He raises up to use “abusive power,” we need to recognize that He could easily have said just this but very much did not. His words are inclusive of “all” Gentile leadership

models, not just the abusive ones. His words call for a departure from the entire worldly system of governing. He isn't calling for a reformed earthly type of government. He is calling for a government from above - His government, in His Church, operating through His leadership. This is what is so different from Gentile leadership. Gentile leadership thinks of itself as owning its businesses. Jesus owns the Church. Gentile leadership thinks of people as being their employees or their servants. Jesus owns the people by virtue of His having purchased them with his blood, and calls leaders to serve. Gentile leadership develops its own independent vision and agenda. The Church is to have no agenda or vision of its own. Jesus casts the vision. Jesus sets the agenda. Jesus is the vision and the agenda. Gentile leadership, as we will see, sees itself as "over" people. Jesus' leadership sees itself as "under" its people. Jesus' leaders are slaves and servants. Gentile leaders are masters and bosses. It shall not be so among you.

Let's move in for a closer look at Jesus' choice of words to express His concept of Church leadership.

Lord Over or Love Over?

The first word that we meet is the Greek word "*Katakuriouo*", translated "**Lord it over**". It also carries with it the idea of "*master, gain dominion over, subdue, rule over someone or something.*"

Foerster, in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, has the following to say of this word: Its meaning is "*To exercise dominion **against** someone, i.e. to one's **own advantage**...for themselves and therewith against those entrusted to them.*"

Thus the concern is one of motivation. If the exercise of authority is ever for personal control, so as to effectuate one's personal goals, rather than exclusively for the good of the one submitting to their authority, and the goals of Jesus Christ, then that authority has been corrupted.

Certainly we are all on tenuous ground when it comes to evaluating and making decisions about the motivations of our leadership, so we are wisest if we stay away from doing so. However, to observe and experience the various expressions of their leadership will form the objective evidence necessary to evaluate the genuineness of their leadership.

The leader is never allowed to pursue his own private agenda when attempting to secure the obedience of those following his leadership. He must be, at all times, sensitive to what is truly the will of God for that individual and what is in their best interest, even if it means that the leader's goals must be set aside.

All too often leaders, having become so familiar with their role of leadership, begin to slip into the subtle deception of thinking that they, by virtue of their position and title, have the responsibility and right to control the lives of those they lead. And, with the passage of time and a desensitization of their awareness in this area, it becomes easier and easier for leadership to develop a thinking that encourages them to develop their own vision for their flock and then move them towards that vision in ways that become more like control than servant example leadership. Certainly the verbiage of "*The Lord has led me to express my authority this way...*" is no guarantee that in fact Christ has led that leader to express his authority in any particular manner. Self deception, based on selfish interests, must be guarded against continually.

Leadership is to be "For" not "Against"

The use of the preposition "*kata*" strongly suggests authority used "**against**" someone, rather

than for them. How subtle is a leader's tendency to use authority in a way that is really an attack against the integrity of another individual, by attempting to coerce them into accomplishing the leader's goals for their lives, so as to protect the leader's personal agenda?

This whole matter of leadership agenda is troublesome in its own right. It seems inherent in leadership to believe that unless they have a clearly defined “*agenda*” they are less than an excellent leader. It is this belief that can so easily lead a good leader astray. Certainly we believe God has plans for His Church, and will reveal those in His time, but that need not become a compelling force to drive leaders to define His agenda, but rather to simply wait on Him to reveal it. This should both feel like and be a very different process than is the general norm for how leaders develop vision, and guaranteed it will feel very different to those who follow their leadership. While we will discuss it later, it bears stating here, the Church was never envisioned by the Apostles as a business or corporation, and thus the thinking that so characteristically marks leadership today, which is a business model thinking, has no place in the Church of Jesus Christ. Once the business model is accepted it introduces a whole new dynamic into what Church is. It has not proven to be a healthy model, and is one that the Lord is transitioning His Church out of.

How often are leaders tempted to control the behavior of those under them, simply because their behavior is in some way making the leader's life uncomfortable, rather than having the pure motivation of seeking the betterment of the follower exclusively?

When leaders forget that each believer is to be encouraged to stand on their own before God, and leaders begin to take too much responsibility for the actions and outcomes of their people then the tendency to overstep their authority becomes highly tempting. To weaken a believer's sense of connection to, and responsibility to seek, the mind of Christ for their own lives, is to set them up to be led into heresy, and is to develop in the leader a “*God Complex*.” Leaders are not to lead in such a fashion that their personal preferences become indistinguishable from the authority of the Word of God, unless their personal preferences are in fact the will of God, as revealed by His Spirit. Leaders must always be cautious lest they allow their flocks to depend too exclusively on their opinions or ideas.

It may feel wonderful to hear a follower say, “*Pastor, I want to submit my whole life to your leadership. I want you to feel free to speak into my life on any area that you think is out of order. I won't marry, take a given job, move, or attempt any area of ministry if you don't think it is God for me to do so.*” This may sound wonderfully submissive, but it is almost more dangerous than a rebellious spirit, in terms of what it produces in the leader. A wise, and grace oriented leader, will gently stop such a believer in their tracks, and help them to see that they, as leaders, are not allowed by Christ to exercise such a sweeping confidence in their own opinion. They must help the believer to learn to study the Word of God and hear the voice of Christ on their own. This is not to take away from the value of godly advice and counsel, but always the believer is to be encouraged to take the responsibility for their final action. Leaders must actually resist the temptation to allow such submission to ever take place.

This word is used in Mark 10:42, another parallel passage to Matthew 20. A different word, but very similar, is used in another parallel passage, Luke 22:24-27 - Kurieo - “*to exercise lordship over.*”

It is also used in a very graphic passage in:

Acts 19:15-16 (NKJV) 15 “And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, **overpowered** them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

How often do leadership lean towards overpowering their people by their knowledge, power, and office, rather than by exposing the love of Christ? Too often I have counseled with those who have “*fled out of the house of God, naked and wounded.*” To be honest with you, in my less enlightened years I think I was the “*demon*” who caused some of that pain.

Later in our study, we will describe the role of leadership, in working with issues of Church discipline, but as we will see, even in cases requiring excommunication, the leadership are never to function as a law unto themselves, but such decisions are in fact the role and responsibility of the entire Church.

Finally, Peter uses this word “*Katakuriouo*” in his important passage on Church leadership:

1 Pet 5:1 (NKJV) “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as *being lords over* those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. 5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

Let me make the point again, that none of the apostles have anything stronger to say about leadership authority than what Jesus said. They simply amplify His words. How often, when we come to such words as Rule or Obey or Submit, do we think that we are being given commands that look more like a slave to a master, than one servant to another, whose call’s differ? Peter is very aware of the carnal tendency of leaders to use their authority to control and manipulate the flock.

In that we are considering Peter's words, it would be well to notice a couple of other words he uses in this context:

“*Not by compulsion*” - this phrase indicates that leaders in the body are to recognize their calling by God and volunteer to lead, rather than having to be drafted like unwilling soldiers. They are to be willing and eager servants of the body of Christ, rather than having to be coerced and chided into service. To fail to heartily accept their calling can become a platform for abuse, due to frustration with their call in life. Because I have the blessing of ministering in various cultures throughout the world, I have found it interesting, that while Western cultures tend to “over control” in issues of Church leadership, many other cultures struggle with a commitment to fully engage in their roles of leadership. Some can’t wait to have a group of people to direct, while others resist the whole notion of directing people, and distance themselves too greatly from the call that is on their lives to lead and encourage.

“*Not for dishonest gain*” - the Greek word “*aiskrokerdas,*” means to lead for any kind of personal gain, which is sought in a selfish way. It certainly covers the idea of serving to obtain exorbitant financial gain, but when it is realized that first century elders were not salaried, it is clear that this word covers far more than just financial gain. Peter warns about using the office of elder for any personal selfish reasons, whether it is the exhilaration that comes from knowing that you can control people to your own ends, or the ability to manipulate people so as to protect your own personal goals for their lives.

“*Be examples*” - “*Tupos*”, from which we get “*type*”. To be a pattern, example, model, or standard. It means to so portray the image of the Servant, the Lord Jesus, that others are drawn to follow your pattern or example and do the will of God. Peter had learned that Jesus didn't use any other means to secure his following, so he simply passes on what he has seen modeled for him. It's

so exciting to recognize that it works. Peter was so committed to serving Jesus that history records for us he followed Him to the point of being crucified upside down. It simply doesn't require manipulation, control, and intimidation, to move people together towards God's vision for their corporate or individual lives. True servant leadership, given time to germinate, will produce the will of God in the lives of those being led. If it doesn't, then we should have a little more confidence in the sovereignty of God, recognizing that it may not have been in His ultimate plan for certain things to take place, rather than trying to make something happen, which in the end will do more to alienate those who follow due to undue pressure placed upon them.

Voluntary Submission

Then Peter goes on, in verse 5, to encourage the younger members of the flock to “*submit*” themselves to their eldership. The word submit - “*hupotasso*”, is a significant choice of words to use. We'll look at it in more depth later, but for now it means “*to lose or surrender one's own rights or will voluntarily, rather than as a result of compulsion.*” While followers are admonished to submit voluntarily, leaders are not given the authority to coerce, manipulate, or seek, through any means, to control those under their oversight, or secure their submission. Their only means of obtaining such a following is by humble service and love. Unfortunately, because the Church has continued in the institutional approach to Church, that Constantine gave us, shepherds are often cast into the role of “*employer*” and thus feel a greater need to require submission to their policies and procedures, as well as applications of Scripture. However, even if the institutional approach to Church be maintained, the godly shepherd will always exercise great caution lest his authority over his employees be construed as a violation of the principle Jesus elucidates. No matter what level of leadership is exercised in the Church, all expressions must line up with the spirit of what Jesus imparts to His disciples. The institutional approach to Church will always make this a very difficult, if not impossible, goal. Make no mistake about it, if ever you hear a leader tell you, their employee, “*I'm in charge here and you are just going to have to obey me,*” it is evident they have no true authority and are falling back on the Gentile approach to leadership. What doesn't work in a godly marriage will never work in the Church either. The Church operates under a different set of mandates and motivations than the world system ever will. The world's system is a “*Bottom Line*” approach. The Church's approach cares as much for the process as the goal. The world eagerly employs hierarchical leadership, yet in the message of Christ, and the writings of the Apostles, hierarchical leadership is conspicuously absent and for good reason. We have but one boss, the Lord Jesus. This alone should serve as notice to all would be leaders who enjoy controlling people. Much of the Church, like Israel, has chosen an earthly king. We call him by various names - Pope, Pastor, Bishop, etc., but in the end he is a replacement for the Lord Jesus, once the Church becomes a business. This must change, and change in is in the wind.

It is significant too, that Peter goes on to say, whatever this submission is, it is not primarily an inferior to a superior, as much as it is an equal to an equal, with everyone willing to submit to everyone else as a demonstration of love and humility. What a tremendous anecdote to overbearing control by leadership. They can only hope to gain a following as they lead by loving example, evidence divine anointing, and themselves submit to those who are commanded to submit to their leadership. When we once come to understand that submission is not about one man submitting to another, but each man submitting to the authority of the Word of the Lord, that the Lord Himself expresses.

When leaders submit to their flock in humility it then releases the Lord Jesus to grant grace and exaltation (verse 6). Those who would ever demand that they be exalted and obeyed, simply because they are a leader, show by their doing so that they in fact do not possess true leadership, but are rather grasping at it in selfish desperation. Again, this is why Church must never be allowed to

become a business, because, for those who function in the role of “*boss*” over employees, this will be very difficult.

To my own embarrassment, I will never forget my first pastorate, and in my youthful zeal and confusion over these issues, attempted to move my congregation towards what I was sure would strengthen their spiritual lives, only to hit a brick wall. Rather than back off and give God time to soften their hearts or change my thinking and priorities, I determined that, just as children often don't like eating certain vegetables that are good for them, my congregation is “*going to*” come into this truth. Well, they didn't, and they quickly decided that I didn't know enough about leading a flock of people, so within a short time I was asked to turn over the pastorate of the Church and return to a place of learning. At the time it was the most humiliating and painful thing I had ever gone through, but in retrospect, though it was terribly painful, it was without question one of the most important lessons of my ministerial career. I wish I could say I learned everything I needed to, as regards humble servant leadership, from that experience, but as with most of us learning comes in many phases.

I remember thinking how rebellious those people were to actually ask me to lay down my pastoral oversight of them. But now, in retrospect, I am convinced what they required was correct and necessary. Those who disqualify themselves through abusive leadership, insensitivity, and failure to lead in humility, should be asked to step aside for further growth and learning. Jesus never intended for a flock to have to endure abusive leadership. The integrity of the people, in the eyes of God, demands that abusive leadership be removed lest that leadership be allowed to destroy a Church's entire trust in the principle of Church leadership.

Peter's words make it very clear that the tendency of leadership is to allow their ego's, personal insecurities, and pride, to get in the way, and become something where they lead by intimidation rather than humble loving service.

Compulsion or Compassion?

The next word in the Matthew 20 passage, that we will take up, is “*Katexousiadzo*”. Foerster, in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, comments on this word's meaning: “Its primary sense is that they “*exercise power over them.*” There is no earthly government without the use of force. But if the reference in “*those who are great*” is not merely to the political authorities, it is likely that the word implies the ***tendency towards compulsion or oppression*** which is immanent in all earthly power, and not merely in political.”

Mat 20:25 (NKJV) But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great ***exercise authority over*** them.”

Luke, in his parallel passage uses the word “*Exousiadzo*”. Parallel in concept, but he chose not to use the “*kata*” preposition.

This word is not used anywhere else in the New Testament, but this one use alone speaks volumes. This is the danger in possessing authority in any dimension of life. To use that authority to compel others to fulfill the leader's agenda is clearly unethical. It is a violation of the integrity of the follower.

One can almost hear the disciples speak up, “*But Lord, how do we get anyone to do what we want them to do if we don't use some compulsion or force to move them towards our goals.*” And

if you look real closely at Jesus you will see that look that must have spread across His face so many times, *“You guys just don't get it do you?” “But Lord, it could take forever to get anything done. If we could just get this building finished by Spring we could harvest so many more people. If we could just get the deacons to do what we want done there would be so much more unity in the Church. If we could just get the people to give more money we could send out so many more missionaries. Lord, at this rate, of just lovingly serving the people and refusing to use any coercion, it could take years to make any progress at all!”* And if we look again at Jesus we might see the look that says, *“True, and would you really want to get it done any other way? What do you gain if you steal the people's joy from them by manipulating and forcing them to do your will through preaching fear and intimidation? If you build big buildings (and you shouldn't) and send out many missionaries, and slowly but surely you erode the people's love and trust for you, have you really gained anything? My way may not be as fast as yours but it regards the integrity of My people and expresses trust in My Holy Spirit to motivate My people to do what I want done. Your job is to love and serve, My job is to inwardly compel. There are just some things you can't do and get away with it. One of them is to use compulsion and oppression.”*

However we are to lead and get the job done it isn't to be any different than Jesus did when He was on earth. He didn't force any of His disciples to do anything. He didn't use compulsion or oppression or manipulation to accomplish anything. He didn't get much accomplished in His three year ministry, as some would count accomplishments. He barely kept 12 ragamuffin disciples from defecting, and one of them gave up before He left. But because He modeled the kind of loving service and non-coercive leadership that He did, they so loved Him that they went out from the upper room ready to give every ounce of their life's strength to building His kingdom. Now what other leader do you personally know who has used that little coercion, and that much loving service, and seen such great results and dedication in those He led? Most shepherds want to change their whole Church's vision and direction inside of six months to a year. Jesus didn't build a thing, but trust, in the time He led them. His entire goal while with His disciples was to show the love and plan of God. Three full years went by without building any buildings, hiring any staffs, planting any Churches, or ordaining any leadership. Day after day He loved, healed, and taught. Slow, methodical preparation. His slow and gentle example of leadership should form the supreme example to all of us. If it took God in the flesh three years to just develop a little trust in His small flock of 12, how much more time do you think it might take mere mortals to accomplish the same thing?

Servant Leadership

The issue of servant leadership is at the heart of Jesus' words. This is really what distinguishes Gentile leadership from Jesus' kind of leadership. I recently experienced a humorous example of how the unbeliever looks at servanthood. After having received repeated assistance from an individual that I very much appreciated I commented to her husband that she was an excellent servant. His reply was, *“Don't let her hear you say that. She's a women's libber, and servanthood is a nasty word among them.”* We laughed and I asked him what word would convey my sentiments best and he answered *“probably goddess.”* So there you have it. Servanthood is frequently not something the unbelieving mind can comprehend. Yet to Jesus the humility, that is essential in taking the servant's role, is the master ingredient necessary to maintain the right attitude in leadership. Just the moment that leaders begin to see themselves as little gods or goddesses they move from servanthood to oppression. Gods are to be served by the people, but servants serve those who are greater.

The comment that I have heard more often than any other, by those legitimately frustrated with the manipulation and coercion of their leaders, is that they feel their leadership treat them as though

they, the people, live to serve them, the leaders, rather than the other way around. Everything about Jesus taught in opposition to this. Once the servant element is lost or submerged, the whole spirit of leadership goes sour.

Jesus' style of leadership is one that creates a sense of equality, and if any other sense is created it is that the leader is beneath his follower as one called to humble himself and serve the followers' needs. Jesus' servant love, wisdom, and the power of His anointing created His following. He never resorted to demanding obedience of His followers. He spoke of the importance of their obedience, but He never directly commanded it.

Listen to Him in John 13, where He washes His disciples feet and forever blows away their concept of leadership as being ones to be served.

John 13:13 (NKJV) "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16 "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

It is the job of every leader to so manifest and create this impression in the lives of those he leads, that they are convinced that he really believes Jesus' words apply to him.

In Western Church culture leaders have allowed and often encouraged a thinking in their people which causes the people to see themselves as "*under*" their shepherd, in terms of value and respect, rather than equal to him in this regard. The use of such words as "*covering*" are used to support a non-biblical concept. Leaders tolerate their flocks taking a subservient role before them. Just as John, in the book of revelation was rebuked for bowing down to the angel, as if he were the Lord, so leadership today need to so guard against encouraging their flocks to bow in body, mind, or spirit before them. Leaders need to accept the responsibility to help their flocks realize that the only difference between them is not value, but calling, and no one calling is more valuable than another. The pattern of exalted leadership in the local Church must come to an end. It can only be turned around by leaders repeatedly teaching and exemplifying, that their role is not more significant than any other role in the Church. They must address this problem head on, and refuse to allow anyone in the Church to treat them as if they were exalted ones. John the Apostle had to learn this lesson:

Rev 22:8 (NKJV) Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 Then he said to me, "See that you *do not do that*. For I am *your fellow servant*, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

Notice that the angels have gotten Jesus' message very clearly. Leaders, though they have powerful callings, are still servants to those they are called to lead, and as such are not to allow their followers to bow before them. Only God is to be bowed before, everyone else stands on level ground.

The hunger we all have, woven into the fabric of our flesh, is to create an environment where our sense of security and significance is protected. In some cases intentionally, and in other cases unwittingly, we pursue ministry, more from desires to enhance security and significance, than to purely glorify Jesus. At all costs, we must be aware of this tendency in our flesh and be prepared to subdue it whenever and wherever it rears its self-willed head.

The pursuit of these two things will kill the spirit of service in leadership, and develop forms of leadership that seek to build personal empires, control the lives of followers, and usurp the authority

of the Lord Jesus. Our only hope is to return to the simple principles Jesus and the Apostles taught, and pray for the grace to submit our human tendencies to His Lordship.