



“Much begins with Confusion” A mystery of Leadership

This article is going to ring an internal bell with many of you, and others of you are going to react with a strong “No way...” But, from my many years of ministry experience, I have come to a completely settled conclusion regarding this little discussed principle of leadership.

Here it is: Much of the knowledge of God that we gain begins with Confusion.

There you have it. You can dislike it, you can deny it, you feel it is wrong and quote 1 Corinthians 14:33

1Co 14:33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, ...

But no matter, while God may not authorize us to “Do” confusing things in our gatherings, He does speak and do things of which He knows the initial response on our parts will be “Confusion.” And, let me take it a step further, by saying that if you are a leader you will find He frequently causes you to speak those things, to those you lead, in a way that initially causes them to be confused. Why? I think I know.

I believe the reason God does this is because He knows how hard it is for us to learn anything new. We resist new insights. We are comfortable with what we know, and changing our belief structures is very difficult for us. So, if He speaks that which causes confusion, and bears witness with it by His Spirit, He knows it will create an inner angst of mind and heart that will pressure us from within to find a resolution to it. To ask the tough questions... The result? New insight.

I know, we don’t like this, and we probably never will. It just plain “feels wrong.” But no matter, this is one of His favorite ways of teaching us things, and He appears settled in this approach.

Now, let’s consider some classic passages of Scripture, to illustrate this point:

First, we begin with John 5:19

John 5:19 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

We trust that whatever approach Jesus uses, to teach the truth, it is an approach He has seen in His Father. While no leader is the equivalent of Jesus, and this principle is not about us attempting to “one-for-one” imitate Jesus, the fact is Leaders are called to speak what they see in the Father, just as Jesus did, otherwise we are speaking from our own minds, or worse yet, from our flesh. Therefore, it is very likely that just as Jesus looked into the Father and then spoke things which

confused His disciples, so also you and I will look into the Father and see Him urge us to say things which will initially confuse our hearers.

But, it is NEVER the intention of God to leave us confused, because confusion is the gateway of knowledge, not the dead end of it.

Does this mean leaders are authorized to be weird, to say things for which they can claim unaccountability due to purposely being confusing because that is what God led them to do? Definitely not! Using confusing, as a manipulative tool of communication, for the purpose of toying with people's minds, can be a very dangerous methodology. Only God can utilize confusion without violating any principles of character or ethics.

I would say it this way. Just about the time you think, "You know, this will confuse my listeners, but it will ultimately do them good..." is the time it is likely arising from within you, rather than proceeding from Him. Generally, the times we will truly be led of God to confuse those we minister to is the time we have no intention of confusing them. We are just speaking what we are hearing in Him. To us it will make complete sense. It will generally surprise us that they didn't get it, that it left them confused. Why? Because it will be a truth we so thoroughly "SEE" in Him, we'll be sure they will "SEE" it too. Our response will most often be "Hmmm, I see it so fully in Him, why don't they?" They don't because He just led you to speak something to them "outside the box" of their current understandings, and it will stretch them. If they are listening it will lead them to seek Him for clarification.

Now watch Jesus operate in this manner:

1 It's just as bad to look lustfully at a woman as it is to commit the act. Mt.5:27,28

2 If your eye or hand gets you in trouble cut them out or off. Mt.5:29,30.

3 Hate every single personal relationship. Lk.14:26

4 Leave every relationship. Mk.10:29; Lk.9:59,60

5 Get rid of all possessions & money. Mk.10:21; Lk.12:33

6 Eat my flesh and drink my blood. John 6

7 God blinds the eyes of people so they will not see the truth. John 12:37-41

8 Go and sell everything you have and come follow me. Luke 18:22

9 Let the dead bury the dead, you come and follow me. Matthew 8:22

10 He knew saying to the paralytic "your sins are forgiven" would confuse His listeners, but He said it anyway. Mark 2:1-11

11 Jesus taught the parable of the Sower, and the disciples didn't get it. Matthew 13:36

Here's an example of Jesus saying something they didn't understand, because it was so outside their box, but they needed to hear it so it would provoke them to seek the answer in God:

Luke 9:44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the

hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. (See also Mark 9:31,32)

He never even attempts to balance any of these statements. There are many more examples of this. Are you aware that many people, down throughout Church history, have plucked out their eyes, or cut off their hands or feet, thinking they were honoring God, by applying literally what Jesus taught? Do you think Jesus has ever lamented His words, thinking, "Oh, I wish I'd never have said that, without qualifying what I really meant. Look at what they did with what I taught."? Absolutely not! He has never once second guessed anything He said or did. He is not at all to blame for their foolishness. Why? Because He only spoke what He saw in God, and God cannot be wrong.

The disciples didn't like these experiences with Jesus, and of course they didn't. We don't appreciate our paradigms being stretched. They make us feel uncomfortable, but it is definitely a learning approach that God uses, and we'd better reckon with it, and instead of always reacting against it, start getting in sync with it, and when it happens, stop, step back inside of ourselves, and speak to our inner man "Hmmm, maybe, rather than react, I should remember this might be God expanding my paradigms, and seek clarification, both from God and the one communicating to me."

So often, as God has led me to do this to people, I have had little to no idea it happened, until I later find out they were offended with me, confused by what I had said, and harbored it in their hearts as an offense of learning. Why not just learn to raise our hands, and ask "Ummm, could you please provide a little clarification with what you just said?"

We must learn to respect this as a divine method of teaching, and move past our offense with it, and start asking for clarification of what we don't grasp.

Mark my words, like it or not, God is going to do this to you. It will happen over and over again throughout your life. In fact, God is so committed to this approach, that He will not only speak to you this way, He will purposely create experiences in your life that will confuse you. The very event will seem so incongruous with what you know of God. It will scream out to you, "If God is God, and God is sooo powerful, He could have and should have prevented this. Why didn't He?" What are you experiencing? Confusion. How can God be good and let this happen? But it is God, and He did let it happen, and most often His intention in doing so is to teach you to trust in Him in new ways, enter into new understandings, and grow in your faith.

Let me return to a previous comment. As a leader you must be very cautious with this principle. You can be wrong. Jesus could not be wrong. Your motives in this can be very mixed or even wrong, but His could never have been. We are imperfect and He was perfect. Therefore, we must avoid creating these kinds of experiences for our listeners, but recognize God will, at times, surprise even us, by causing us to say or do something that will confuse our listeners. It is just part and parcel with our being leaders.

Will this create conflict with those you lead? Absolutely! You can count on it! Guaranteed! They will be mad at you, not appreciate it or you, and question your motives. They will try to convince you that you "have" to be clearer in your teaching, and not say things that ever confuse them. Just refer them to this article, ask them to read it over, and then make an appointment to help them work through their frustration.

Don't let the enemy of your soul condemn you. You are called to be faithful to Him, and trust Him with the outcomes.

Listen to Jeremiah argue with God over the way He had led Jeremiah into the trap, as a leader, of saying things that just got him in trouble with the people:

Jeremiah 4:10 Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD, surely you have utterly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, 'It shall be well with you,' whereas the sword has reached their very life."

Jeremiah 20:7 O LORD, you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me.

What Jeremiah is telling us, is that he had been led to prophesy certain things that even he believed meant things would turn out differently than they had, and then he realized God had led him to say things He knew would not be realized in their lifetimes. It would one day be “well with them,” but certainly not in their lifetimes. What was the result? Becoming a “laughinstock,” “mocked,” not being understood or appreciated, and having his motives, calling, and integrity challenged.

We may not like some of God’s ways, but He knows the nature of our fallen condition, and obviously He knows that breaking us out of our paradigms is not an easy task, and thus He employs, and often leads His Leaders to employ, a very uncomfortable methodology called “Confusion,” to break those rigid boxes.

Remember this, you didn’t call yourself to the ministry you have. God did. You don’t have the right to demand of Him that He make your ministry comfortable, appreciated, or understood. We are called to be led of His Spirit, and work with the pieces that explode before us. The process of regeneration isn’t always pretty. People resist change. People hate change. They’d rather follow a well conditioned lie, than go through the cathartic experience of entering into new truth.

Just look at the last 1850 years of Church history. Anyone with a third grade education can see that Church history RADICALLY departed from the Traditions of the apostles, and the foundations in Christ that they laid, but look at how long the Church has tolerated it. Why? Because we hate change. We learn to live with the pain of error, and prefer it over the change process.

Just listen to Jeremiah decry this:

*Jeremiah 5:31 the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; **my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?***

This doesn’t make any sense, but it is how we are. Therefore God is committed to breaking us out of these mindsets, and moving us into the truth. It is His way. We must get used to it!