

# The Stewardship of Spiritual Leadership: Leading like Christ

## INTRODUCTION:

*An intensity such as never before was seen is taking possession of the world. In amusement, in moneymaking, in the contest for power, in the very struggle for existence, there is a terrible force that engrosses body and mind and soul. **In the midst of this maddening rush, God is speaking. He bids us come apart and commune with Him. "Be still, and know that I am God."** Psalm 46:10. {Ed 260.2} Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving the blessing of **real communion** with God. They are in too great haste. With hurried steps they press through the circle of Christ's loving presence, pausing perhaps a moment within the sacred precincts, **but not waiting for counsel.** They have no time to remain with the divine Teacher. With their burdens they return to their work. {Ed 260.3}*

*These workers can never attain the highest success until they learn the secret of strength. **They must give themselves time to think, to pray, to wait upon God for a renewal of physical, mental, and spiritual power. They need the uplifting influence of His Spirit. Receiving this, they will be quickened by fresh life.** The wearied frame and tired brain will be refreshed, the burdened heart will be lightened. **Not a pause for a moment in His presence, but personal contact with Christ, to sit down in companionship with Him--this is our need.** {Ed 260}*

## ▪ BASICS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

- **It is both a God given gift and a God given responsibility.**
- Those with whom God has entrusted His truth, must possess the same beneficent spirit that Christ manifested.... They must hold all they have – property, mental powers, spiritual strength – as not their own, but only lent them to advance the cause of Christ on earth. –Gospel Workers, p. 335

- We do not, as followers of Christ, realize our true position. ... ALL the good things we have are a loan from our Savior. He has made us stewards.  
-3Testimonies, p. 397
- **In spiritual leadership you are NOT the leader. You are nothing more than an instrument (a tool) in the hands of God. In deep humility recognize that: You must be nothing that God might be all.**
- *Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. –John 5:19*
- *Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but **the Father who dwells in me does HIS works.** –John 14:10*
- **Our spiritual, personal and professional growth is dependent on how we respond to the circumstances God allows us to experience.**
- The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ... ALL experiences and circumstances are God's workmen whereby good is brought to us."–*Ministry of Healing*, 488-489.
- **If you are faithful in a little, God will entrust you with more. (Matt. 25:21, Luke 16:10)**

#### ▪ THE DAILY PREPARATION TO LEAD

- With Christ as our model we need to play "follow the Leader" every day.
- *To His workers Christ says, "I have given you an example that you should do as I have done." - John 13:15. (MH 500.4)*
- What Did Christ Do to Prepare Himself Daily to Lead?

- Because the life of Jesus was a life **of constant trust, sustained by continual communion** (with God), His service for heaven was without failure or faltering...In order to be a blessing to men, He must commune with God, from Him obtaining: 1) **energy**, 2) **perseverance**, 3) **steadfastness** (dedication/commitment). {GW 255.4}
- **Even Christ during His life on earth sought His Father daily for fresh supplies of needed grace**; and from this communion with God He went forth to strengthen and bless others. {GW 510.2}
- He strengthens His faith by prayer, and by communion with Heaven gathers to Himself power to: (1) **resist evil** and to (2) **minister to the needs of men**. {GW 511}
- As He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), every day's experience was an outpouring of His life. **In one way only could such a life be sustained. Jesus lived in: 1) dependence upon God and 2) communion with Him.** {ED 80}
- He (Christ) was **wholly dependent** upon God, {DA 362.4}
- **Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit.** In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from slumber, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others. (COL, p. 139)
- As a man (Christ) supplicated the throne of God, until **His humanity was charged with a heavenly current that connected humanity with divinity.** Receiving life from God, He imparted life to men. –Education, p. 81
- **To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling.** –MB, p. 21

## ▪ THE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEAD FOR CHRIST

- **When the will of man cooperates with the will of God it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be accomplished at His command may be accomplished through His strength. All His biddings are enablings.** –*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 333
  
- Definition of “AUTHORITY” – It comes from the Latin word meaning: to create, to enlarge, and to enable growth. Authority is actually the nurturing ingredient in our roles as parents, employees, spouses, friends etc. Healthy authority is about neither power nor control. In the truest sense, authority means to author (enable growth) in something or someone. From the Biblical perspective authority does not control, it authors.
  - Paul understood this concept when he wrote in Hebrews 12:2: “Looking unto Jesus the **author** and **finisher** of our faith.”
  - The pen of inspiration says, “Hiding self in the Savior, they exalted the great plan of salvation, and the life of Christ – the **Author** and **Finisher** of this plan.” *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 209
  - Question: Do you think of the greatest authority in the universe, the God of all creation as an authoritarian doing things just because He can? Or do you know Him as a loving, saving Father as an author, a finisher, One who lovingly creates, enlarges or lives and enables us to grow. He is the One who, with our Elder Brother authored the plan of salvation.
  - Christ like authority does not control with power or force – it authors. Plead for the Holy Spirit to guide you through sensitive issues enabling you to do as Christ would do and not as you would do.
  - Christ’s call for you is to use your position of leadership to author: to enable, to lift up, to encourage growth in others.

- Satan is doing all he can to damage every child's (and adult's) emotions because that will have an effect on what motivates all their thoughts and actions. Their thoughts will be driven by feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. The dysfunctional needs for approval and acceptance or the fear of disapproval will become the driving force behind all they think or do. A huge part of sanctification is allowing the indwelling Christ to gain the victory over damaged emotions. This is part of the process of being restored in the image of Christ. (Education, p. 15)
- While Satan is seeking to kill, steal and destroy the emotional base of each person, Christ is calling His leaders to the work of lifting up, encouraging, and pointing others to Himself. When we, being led by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, tell a student, friend or acquaintance that we observed a characteristic of Christ in their words or actions we are doing the sacred work of prophesying – encouraging them to continue growing “in Christ.”
- As spiritual leaders we need to be very intentional in recognizing growth in Christ in others and affirming them in their spiritual journey. And you don't do this in front of a lot of people you do it one-on-one. That way your motives remain pure and so will their motives. This is what authoring is all about when we are leading like Christ.

- **THE SEDUCTION OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS**

- **In the heart of Christ where reigned perfect harmony with God there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause nor dejected by censure and disappointment. Amidst the greatest opposition and most cruel treatment He was still of good courage.** –*Desire of Ages*, p. 330
- The Seduction of Knowledge & Experience:

- Spiritual Relationship Leakage: What my Father is teaching me.
  - If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. –DA, p. 302 (To restore in man the image of Christ is the object of education and the great object of life. Ed. p.15)
- THE “FOUR RIGHTS”

When our lives are in absolute surrender to Christ, we must trust the Holy Spirit to prompt us to:

- a. Do the right thing
- b. In the right way
- c. At the right time
- d. For the right reason

#### **SUPPLIMENTAL:**

From Journal: *Things My Father is Teaching Me*

**SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP LEAKAGE:** (Oct. 8, 2011)

Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day. He will so arrange affairs as to hedge up their way, entangle them with earthly treasures, cause them to carry a heavy, wearisome burden, that their hearts may be **overcharged** (to fill too full) with the cares of this life, and the day of trial may come upon them as a thief. {GC 625.2}

Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his blessings: <sup>3</sup> He forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, <sup>4</sup> He redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, <sup>5</sup> He satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. –Psalm 103:2-5

For the past few weeks I have found my thoughts becoming more and more stormy and unreasonable. Satan was prompting thoughts that were contrary to the thoughts God would have me think about other people and myself. When those thoughts came they consumed me and I could do nothing about it. I begged God to remove from me thoughts of pride (I am the director of education), jealousy, anger, resentment etc. I asked Him to help me stop questioning the motives of others and building mental worse case scenarios that only served to fuel my negative emotions. Like the disciples one night on the sea, my thoughts were “stormy and unreasonable” so God in love permit another storm that He might get the full attention of His boy.

After several days of focusing on my “sins of the mind” the Holy Spirit began to gently speak to me saying: “You are focused on the sins (plural) when you need to be looking at sin (singular). Sins are the byproduct, the outward manifestations of SIN which is a separation from God. “Child you have gradually wandered away from spending 1 ½ - 2 hours with me in the morning. Now, on most days, you sleep in late and rush past Me on the way out the door. When you do pause for a few minutes it’s only to read something about Me; but you don’t take time to communicate with Me. And in the evening you are more consumed with the golf channel and world-series than you are in knowing Me. You need to go back to the basics and make Me the priority of your life again.

The Holy Spirit also reminded me that when I became director 3 years ago I was totally dependent on God. I walked by faith every day. Now, 3 years later, I know the job; I know the problems and I know the people. I know the answers to the issues I will face and am capable of solving most anything that is placed in my path. The fact is, I only need God on an emergency basis; but there is no need for absolute surrender or total commitment.

Then came the storm that God used to bring me to my senses – the Hinsdale Ac. issue.

Late Friday afternoon, knowing that I would be involved in this explosive personnel issue for the next couple of days, I decided to go for a walk. I couldn’t get these anxious, troubling thoughts out of my mind. My concern was not really about resolving this issue. I was concerned about the spiritual damage being done to so many people; but the deep seated motive of my heart was more about what I should do and how I would be perceived – what would people think of me. I had to look good through this or at least not look bad.

It was while I was on the walk that Friday afternoon the Holy Spirit began to prompt me to take my focus off self and to start appreciating God's blessings and mercies that surrounded me. After a few minutes of focusing on praising God I found that the stormy thoughts had been replaced with thoughts of the abundance of the Trinity in my behalf. And it was in this mindset of gratitude that the Holy Spirit gently whispered, "You have wandered away child, you need to come back to making Me first in all areas of your life." What a relief it was to confess this sin and know that God had forgiven my sin and cleansed (cleaned me up) of all unrighteousness. I ended the walk knowing I had been restored and with a new passion to spend quality and quantity time alone with Christ every day.

And with that return to spending time with God, I have noticed that the humility of Christ has taken the place where a pride had reined. Those thoughts that were so malignant have been replaced with a desire to walk humbly each day as an instrument (a tool) in God's hands. By remaining focused on Christ I am once again able to live "Above the circumstances" of each day. What joy I am finding to have Jesus back at the center of my being. The words of the old hymn ring true: "O, what peace we often forfeit, O, what needless pain we bear; all because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer."

After realizing my true standing before God that Friday afternoon, the Holy Spirit reminded me of this text:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. –Psalm 139:23, 24*

In a kind and gentle way the Holy Spirit revealed to me the wickedness of my heart. He then went on to explain, "Child, don't focus on the wickedness (contrary thoughts) focus on Jesus." I am convinced that as long as I keep my spiritual focus correct, the Holy Spirit will guard against spiritual relationship leakage. It is He who brings Christ to live in me thus enabling me to live the abundant life "in Christ."

Here is what I'm talking about: (one of the ways God speaks to us is through leading us to read spiritual thoughts that His Spirit has placed in our path at just the right time)

"Moses had a deep sense of the personal presence of God.....The presence of God was sufficient to carry him through the most trying situations in which a man could be placed. **Moses did not merely think of God; he saw Him. God was the constant vision before him; he never lost sight of His face. He saw Jesus as**



**his Savior, and he believed that the Savior's merits would be imputed (credited) to him. This faith** was to Moses no guesswork; it **was a reality**. This is the kind of faith we need, faith that will endure the test. Oh, **how often we yield to temptation because we do not keep our eye upon Jesus!** Our faith is not continuous because, through **self-indulgence**, we sin, and then we cannot endure “as seeing Him who is invisible.” **My brother, make Christ your daily, hourly companion, and you will not complain that you have no faith.** Contemplate Christ. View His character. Talk of Him. **The less you exalt self, the more you will see in Jesus to exalt. God has a work for you to do, keep the Lord ever before you.**” –Testimonies vol. 5,651-653.

The final prompting the Holy Spirit gave me on this matter had to do with where God had called me to labor in His vineyard. Gradually, imperceptibly, I had wandered away from God’ call 3 years previously when prompted to accept the position as director of education. At that time the Spirit’s prompting was, “I am calling you to labor ‘under the radar.’ There are only a few I call to live in positions of ‘high visibility’ and you are not one of them. If you want me to continue expanding your territory (prayer of Jabez), it is dependent on you quietly laboring in anonymity. You are to labor in the shadows where the chances of you developing a proud heart and a self-sufficient spirit are minimized. You need to stay as far away from being tempted to seek your own glory as possible. Anonymity is the place where you are best able to hear My voice saying, “Well done child. You did what I wanted you to do and you did it the way I wanted it to be done.”

Final statement of praise:

**Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his blessings—<sup>3</sup> He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases,<sup>4</sup> He redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion,<sup>5</sup> He satisfies my desires with good things so that my youth is renewed like the eagle’s.** –Psalm 103: 2-5

**He restores my soul and leads me in paths of righteousness.** –Psalm 23:3

When the will of man cooperates with the will of God  
it becomes omnipotent (having unlimited power).

Whatever is to be done at His command  
may be accomplished through His strength.

All of His biddings are enablings.

-COL, p. 333