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Series: Leadership

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INDIVIDUAL LEADERSHIP

Hello again. We are continuing our discussion on the topic of leadership. Today we are going to talk about individual leadership, which means you or me. Leadership begins with your inner self. Some people are quickly motivated and ready to become a leader. As they begin to lead, they start floundering, and then they are not successful, because they have never analyzed their strengths and weaknesses or how they can best use those qualities. That is the reason they fail.

Who is the perfect model for us to follow as a leader? Who should we emulate? Jesus. After Jesus was baptized, He went off alone for 40 days. We should follow Jesus' example. As a leader, we need to take time to contemplate and prepare ourselves mentally, the same as Jesus did when He went off by Himself for 40 days before He was challenged by the devil. He was ready and strong. At the end of the 40 days, He began his ministry. You need to do the same and prepare yourself not only mentally, but physically and emotionally as well. That is very important.

We know that Jesus set a goal, which was to spread the truth and to save us and take us to heaven. You also need to set personal goals. Every morning when you get up, think about what lies ahead for the day and set a goal. You should take a personal inventory and check your attitude to make sure you have a positive attitude. When you arrive at work, greet others pleasantly with a smile. Check to see how people respond to you and if you need to make any adjustments.

Take a look at how you interact with people and how you can build up those relationships. It's important to look at yourself. If you are negative and always think, "I can't," then you need a serious attitude adjustment. You need to figure out how to change an "I can't" attitude into an "I can" attitude. That's important.

It doesn't matter if you are president or CEO or own a small business. All people need to take a personal inventory. Good leaders constantly look for ways to improve themselves.

If, after taking a personal inventory, maybe you find that you are a bit of a complainer. You notice that you complain or whine about different things continually, such as being cold or bored or whatever. Once you analyze yourself, you need to nip that behavior in the bud and not let Satan take hold and encourage negativity. Negative thinking can derail your goal.

Sometimes we overlook the small things, thinking they don't matter. However, a little bit of complaining or a little bit of negativity or being lazy or bored or any number of other

things can allow the devil to take hold and grab onto that small thing. You need to avoid those things and continue to work toward your goal. Continue to pray about your goal and contemplate and establish a personal relationship with God and with Jesus. That's a very important way to build up and improve yourself.

Attitude is how you see yourself. It is that "I can't" or "I can" attitude. If you analyze yourself and find that you are egotistical, you have to stop that behavior right away. That's important. But how do you know if you are doing that? There are a couple of different ways. You can go through a personal inventory or self-analysis. You can also watch how other people respond to you. Here's an example: Maybe you go into the Deaf club, and people tend to avoid you a little bit. You might notice their behavior toward you. Begin thinking about their response and searching for clues. You can do some self-analysis and think about what behavior is causing people to treat you that way.

You also might be able to ask a close friend for their opinion. Maybe your friend will be able to give you some feedback to know if you are a complainer or a whiner. The important thing is to be quiet and not to respond. Accept the feedback, whether it is an insult or a compliment. Good leaders love feedback.

I experienced this situation when I asked a few people to sit down with me and give me some feedback. A few things that they said were really hurtful. But what could I do? That was their opinion and how they saw me. I studied and made some changes. Some of the feedback was complimentary, which I appreciated. Accept all feedback so you can continually improve yourself and become the best person you can be.

You need to keep learning and growing on a daily basis to grow closer to God, to walk with Jesus and to keep improving yourself. Study the Bible. There are so many wonderful examples in the Bible of how you can improve yourself inside and out, and how you can learn to take on more responsibilities. All the examples are right there for you to learn from.

Some leaders are egotistical or hypocritical. Look at the leadership example of Jesus found in John 18:5. Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples to pray. Judas brought the Roman soldiers into the garden. Jesus asked them who they were looking for. When they said they were looking for Jesus, He came out of the crowd and said, "I am He."

Did you see how Jesus responded? He said, "I am He." Wow! Jesus took on that responsibility and said, "That's me." So one important thing is you must be yourself, just as Jesus was Himself. You should not be egotistical or a hypocrite. Just be yourself. That's very important. People are not stupid. They can take one look at you and know whether or not what they see is really who you are or if you are being a hypocrite. If that is what they see, then they are not going to listen to you. Your goals are going to fail, and the devil wins. I'm trying to warn you to be yourself. Just like Jesus said, "I am He." He could have said, "No, I'm not Jesus. He's over there somewhere. I'm sorry but you have the wrong person. Judas came and kissed the wrong person." They didn't have ID cards back then. You need to behave the same as Jesus when He said, "I am He" with no shame.

You need to do the same thing. You need to know your strengths and weaknesses. Don't try to cover up some skills and say that you are good at everything. Humbly share the

areas in which you have skills. Be open about the areas in which you are not skilled. If you know someone else who has the skills you lack, suggest that person. People will respect your humbleness and adore you, which means they will listen to you and follow you. Your goals will succeed.

You must find your purpose on this earth. God put you here on this earth for a purpose. God had a reason. He didn't arbitrarily place people on the earth. All over the world people are born, and God has a plan for each individual. John 18:37 says, *"So Pilate asked him, 'Are you a king, then?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. I was born and came into the world for this one purpose, to speak about the truth. Whoever belongs to the truth belongs to me.'"* Jesus already knew He had one purpose—only one—to spread the truth.

As you take a look at yourself, you need to ask yourself, "What is my purpose?" Pray to God and ask to discover your purpose. God will help you and provide an answer.

Your relationship with Jesus is important. As the time of the crucifixion drew near, Jesus knew what the end would be, but He stayed strong. You also need to stay strong. There will be people who are close to you who will say negative things against you. I've experienced the same thing. It hurts. Of course it hurts, but you have to be able to ignore what is said, because God is with you and you can be strong. Just continue on in the truth.

There's no reason to lie. Once people catch you in a lie, then they are not going to listen to you or trust you ever again. All it takes is one lie to hurt your reputation. When you walk with Jesus, people are aware of that, but lying will destroy their confidence in you. People will know you are not walking with Jesus if you lie. That means you are a hypocrite, and people won't listen to you. Take this as a warning. It is important to be humble. Be yourself. And if asked who you are, proudly say, "That's me!" and walk in truth.

It is important to be prepared. Know your talents and skills. One time when I gave a lecture, the audience started questioning me, and I wasn't prepared. I hadn't read the report but thought I was fine. I stood up in front of these people and started giving my presentation. I felt really good when it was over and thought I'd done a great job. Then it was time for questions and answers. One woman asked if I had read the report and wanted to know my opinion. Oh, I was stymied! At that exact moment, everyone was looking at me, and I looked ridiculous. I'm warning you to be prepared. Know what you are talking about. Be ready. That way you will be able to face any situation. And that's part of being humble. Being prepared with the skills you should have and being ready. Part of the responsibility of being a leader includes being prepared inside and out. People might be negative or talk against you, but be prepared and be humble. If you are complimented, include your team, so they are recognized, too.

One of the most important characteristics in becoming a leader is be able to take a personal inventory. Ask for God's help through Jesus' name to aid you in your self-analysis and soul searching, so you will have the right attitude and be able to succeed.

God will work with you and help you grow as a person and as a Christian.



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