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Christian Leadership

Radically Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



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CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Everyone in the world has problems. Your success and happiness in life as a Christian leader depends upon your willingness to help someone through their problems and to solve them. Successful people are problem solvers. Examples are: doctors who solve physical problems of their patients, lawyers who solve legal problems, and a mechanic who solves automobile problems for their customers.

We will note that in the Bible, Jesus was a person who solved people's problems. Hundreds of people were burdened with guilt because of their sins, and Jesus offered forgiveness to them. Many were spiritually starved, and Jesus said, "...I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:35). Many others had their bodies stricken with sickness and diseases. Jesus "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10:38). Many people were also possessed with evil spirits and Jesus set them free. Jesus had something that other people needed, He solved their problems. This is why hundreds of people sat for days as He taught them concerning the laws of God and how to have loving relationships with other people. People flocked to Jesus to hear His words of eternal life, joy, forgiveness, healing and health (Matthew 4:23-25).

Jesus is our example. Let me ask you this question, what do you have to offer someone? What do you enjoy doing for others? You, my friend, are not an accident. God planned your birth on earth. The Scripture in Jeremiah 1:5 says, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee."

God has created you as someone special to lead and to be a blessing to others in need. You have talents from God to contribute to others. Think of your contribution to others as an assignment from God. A lawyer is assigned to his client, a wife is assigned to her husband, parents are assigned to their children, employees are assigned to their boss.

Your assignment is always to a person or group of people. For example, Moses was assigned by God to the children of Israel to deliver them from Egyptian bondage. Aaron was assigned to assist Moses in this work.

God has assigned you to be a leader and to help people in their problems and to make their burdens lighter. You may be assigned to be a saint in a church, a pastor to lead a flock, an evangelist to travel the world, a teacher to teach the Word of God, or a missionary to the nations abroad. Find those who need you and your leadership qualities and what you have to offer them.

Don't hide your gifts and talents given to you by God and put them under a bushel or hide them in the earth. Find your place in the world, in the church, among people, and serve them to the best of your ability and lead them to salvation through Jesus Christ. Build your life and ministry around that contribution. This is what Jesus did while here on earth. He walked and worked among the people. This was the secret of His great leadership.

You must have faith and believe in your God given talents. You must never show signs of doubt and discouragement to the people. Never give place to doubt. Your thoughts have presence. They are like currents moving through the air. Your thoughts are capable of drawing people toward you or driving them away from you. Be positive in your person and attitude. Have you ever seen someone walk into a room and the room light up with excitement?

Your attitude and presence will speak for itself in many cases. Smile often, walk upright, talk in a mild manner, be positive, show compassion in your tone of voice, and people will flock to you. They did to Jesus.

Your attitude is always sensed. You will never succeed in life or in the ministry

unless you really believe in your work and calling. You must have faith in the Gospel you are promoting to the people. You must believe that the Word of God will change people. Jesus believed that His message of salvation would satisfy people. “.Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13-14).

Jesus believed in His ministry to the people, to give them life, peace, and joy. “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Jesus saw the people around Him as damaged products. He knew He was their connection for repair. Nobody could take His place and He knew it. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” (John 10:27).

You must take the time necessary to understand and know the Word of God. You must study the Scriptures, and rightly divide the Word. Enrolling in a Bible college or taking some Christian Bible courses would be very beneficial to your ministry. I hear of some ministers preaching that Moses built the ark and that he led the children of Israel across the Jordan river. I know of some ministers who cannot preach beyond the 2nd chapter of Acts. Success in the ministry takes time to study, pray, and follow the leading of the Holy Ghost (2 Timothy 2:15).

Jesus was very busy in His ministry, He was teaching, preaching, traveling, performing miracles, and mentoring the unlearned. However, He always took the time to get alone with the Father and renew His understanding of His purpose, His plan, and His message. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). One of the secrets of the leadership of Jesus was that He believed in His message.

Jesus also never misrepresented His message. Remember, liars are eventually exposed. It may take weeks or even months, but the truth always surfaces at one time or another. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper.” (Proverbs 28:13).

You must make sure that you preach and teach the truth to people. People want the truth and are fearful of untruth and misrepresentation (John 18:38). Jesus had the greatest truth on earth - salvation. He offered the whole human race the opportunity of being redeemed. He spoke of heaven and of angels "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:2).

Jesus never painted a distorted picture to the people. Jesus warned His disciples of **persecution**. "But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues" (Matthew 10:17).

Jesus warned his disciples of their **afflictions**. "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake" (Matthew 24:9). Jesus spoke of **loneliness**. "...The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20).

Jesus believed in preparing His disciples and people for any possible situation that could happen. He was honest, and His teaching was far more than a "pie in the sky" message that many preachers are presenting today. Jesus never taught a message of how to feel good and prosper, how to obtain riches of this world. Jesus never tickled the ears of His listeners with prosperity messages.

The apostle Paul said, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep" (2 Corinthians 11:24-25).

You must be prepared to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ if you are to be a true servant of Christ, and a good spiritual leader of men (2 Timothy 3:12).

Jesus went to where the people were. He went to where the people needed Him. To be a spiritual leader of men, you must activate yourself and go to where the people are. Move toward your neighbors, move toward the members of your family. Get on

the telephone or computer, and contact those who would have an interest in your Gospel message.

You may feel shy, timid, and even feel inadequate, but you will not succeed in life as a leader of men if you are not connected to people. Success involves people. People who enable you to succeed may not always come to you, you must go to them.

Jesus never sat upon a throne in the middle of each city and say, "This is My palace, this is the only place you can see me." He went to the marketplace, and to the boats of the fishermen. He went into the synagogues, and into the homes of the people. Jesus went everywhere. He "...went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere" (Luke 9:6).

Jesus was reachable, He made Himself accessible to the people. What is keeping you from reaching out to others? Is it the fear of being rejected? There is something far more better than rejection: **Your dreams and goals**. Christian leaders dread rejection, but they believe their goal in reaching people is worth it.

Jesus left the comfort of heaven. He left the presence of angels, and was willing to walk into an atmosphere that was sinful and imperfect. He stepped out of a magnificent and perfect kingdom into a world that was confused, stained with sin and deadly. But, He walked into the lives of those who needed Him. He went to where the people were.

A Christian leader is connected to people. You cannot stay on an island by yourself, you must be among people to lead, that is what a true leader is. Lawyers need clients, doctors need patients, singers need musicians, salespeople need customers.

Jesus went to where the people were hurting. He went to the lame, the poor, the wealthy. He talked to the learned, the ignorant, the hungry, and the thirsty.

A Christian leader must take time to plan. Remember that champions plan.

Planning is the starting point for any dream or goal that you possess. You may ask, what is a plan? A plan is a written list of arranged actions necessary to achieve your desired goal. "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it" (Habakkuk 2:2).

Jesus planned your future while you were in the womb of your mother. To be a Christian leader, you must submit to His plan for your life. Quit trying to resist the plan of God for your life. Quit trying to resist the calling of God upon your life. Quit trying to say that others are more qualified than you are. Quit fighting against God as Saul did.

God scheduled or planned the birth, the crucifixion, and resurrection of His Son before the foundation of the earth. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship Him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

God has always honored men who planned. Noah planned the building of the ark, Solomon took time to plan the building of the Temple. Moses even took the time to plan the Tabernacle.

Your Bible is the plan of God for you, the world, and eternity. It is the undeniable proof that God thinks ahead. Most of the Bible is prophecy, a description of the future before it occurs.

Jesus taught, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" (Luke 14:28-31).

You must plan the hours of your day, plan your week, plan your month. Don't waste

time thinking of a plan, make a plan to avoid wasting time. Even the ants plan and think ahead. “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathered her food in the harvest” (Proverbs 6:6-8).

You must plan ahead to be a Christian leader of men. You must plan your time, plan your resources, plan your methods of approaching people, plan your expenses, plan your geography, etc.

A Christian leader must also take time to rest. Fatigue can be costly. Remember that a tired mind rarely makes good decisions. One bad decision can create countless tragedies. Rest and recreation is not a sin. Rest time is repair time. It is a time for renewing. It is receiving time. It helps to release your potential.

Even Jesus was a man of action in His ministry, a people person. He healed, preached and taught, and walked among the people. He also knew the importance of rest and relaxation as well. “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while” (Mark 6:31). Every day

Jesus faced hundreds of the sick and afflicted who screamed for His attention. Many were demon possessed. Mothers reached for Him, and fathers ask Him to pray for their children. Even children did not want to leave His presence.

But Jesus separated Himself to receive. He knew He could only give away that which He possessed. Work time is giving. Rest time is receiving. You, my friend, must have both to be a successful Christian leader.

God created the earth in six days, but He took the time to rest on the seventh day. He set a good example for us. Jesus did the same thing, as He understood the balance of rest and work, which might be the reason He was able to accomplish so much in three and one-half years of His ministry.

Life can be very demanding. People can also be demanding. In fact, the more you succeed in being a Christian leader, the more people will demand of you. Rebuilding yourself will require your utmost attention. Take one day a week off completely and relax. Focus your attention on something else other than your ministry to others, such as your family, your children, etc. Your mind will think clearer and you will make better decisions. You will accomplish far more in less time.

Stop your frantic push for success in being a Christian leader. Take the time to taste the present. The fires of desire to lead will always rage within you, but you must dominate that rage and focus it. Learn to rest.

You may encounter rejection many times in being a Christian leader. Remember, “No” simply means to “Ask again.” Stop for a moment and review your past experiences. You experienced rejection when you were a child. Some of your schoolmates may not have liked you, but you made it anyway.

Rejection is not fatal, it is merely someone’s personal opinion. Remember that Jesus experienced more rejection than any human who ever lived on earth. He was born in a stable. He was born as an outcast to society. Many of His followers turned against Him and followed Him no more. He was rejected by His own people, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11).

Did Jesus quit and give up? When Judas betrayed Him, did He allow Himself to become demoralized? No! Jesus knew that He did not have to win every person to be successful in His mission. He went on to the others, those who discerned His value. “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John 1:12). Jesus knew His worth, and He knew His worth as a leader of men.

Jesus knew that critics died, but His plan was eternal. Jesus was willing to experience a season of pain to create an eternity of gain. Some things last longer than

rejection - your goals and dreams of being a Christian leader.

You need to move beyond your scars of the past. Not everyone will receive you and celebrate with you your success. Remember that Jesus bore the scars of being a spiritual leader of men. Need I explain the scars in His hands and feet, put there by those who rejected Him. “He is despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not” (Isaiah 53:3).

The Pharisees rejected Jesus. The religious sect called Sadducees rejected Him. The religious leaders despised Him. Those who should have recognized His worth wanted to destroy Him. Jesus risked rejection to become the golden link between man and God.

Jesus taught His disciples how to handle rejection. “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet” (Matthew 10:14).

You were created to change somebody for the good. Every person you meet today is trying to change their life in some way or another. They desire excellence. Some want financial freedom, some want their health to improve. They hate loneliness. You may not be sent to everyone, but you are definitely sent to someone.

You may not be qualified to help every person you meet, but, somebody needs what you possess. Besides the Word of God, some people may need your warmth, your love, your gifts, or a special opportunity you can give them.

Jesus knew that He could change people for the good. He possessed something that could eliminate sorrow and heartache from their life. He was a Restorer. He was a Repairer. “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Jesus understood the insatiable appetite for self-improvement and excellence. “And the whole multitude sought to touch Him: for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all” (Luke 6:19).

There are four kinds of people in your life: those who add, those who subtract, those who divide, and those who multiply. Every relationship will affect you - for good or for bad. Each relationship nurtures a strength or a weakness within you.

Thousands of people want to change, they just don't know how to change. Every alcoholic hates their bondage. Most smokers long to quit. Drug addicts sit for hours wondering how can they break their chains of bondage.

Jesus looked for people in trouble, this is why He told His disciples He needed to go through Samaria, where He met a woman with five marriages that had failed. He talked, she listened. Jesus changed her life so permanently, she went back into the city proclaiming she had found the Messiah. She conquered her past by focusing on her future.

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). Jesus was the water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, a road map to the lost, and a companion to the lonely.

Stop for a moment and think. What are your greatest gifts God has given you? What is the center of your expertise? Are you a good listener? Are you a good speaker? Whatever your gift is, that is what God will use to bless others through you. “A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men” (Proverbs 18:16).

Your gift may not be needed by everybody, but it is definitely needed by somebody. Who needs your gift? What are your gifts? Whose life are you capable of improving

today? Whose income could you improve with proper teaching? What peace of mind could you affect? You as a Christian leader are capable of motivating somebody. Maybe you can provide a climate or atmosphere that unlocks the creativity of another. People want to succeed. People want to improve.

Someone has been waiting for you and your gifts for a lifetime. They are worth pursuing. You are the golden thread missing in their life.

Someone has said that money is merely a reward for solving a problem. Money is a reward, it is what you receive when you help someone else achieve their goal. I heard a preacher say one time that money is the root of all evil. Of course, this is an untrue statement. The Bible says that the **love** of money is the root of all evil (I Timothy 6:10). Another Scripture says that money answereth all things (Ecclesiastes 10:19).

Money is very important to you as a Christian leader. You cannot live in your home without money. Electric bills, water bills, phone bills, and taxes have to be paid. You cannot provide for your family without money. Your automobile cost money to operate. Your clothes cost money. Most marriage counselors say that the number one cause of divorce today is financial conflict.

Even Jesus recognized the importance of money in His ministry. Many people think that Jesus was a wondering nomad who wore a dirty robe and sandals and lived off of scraps of food in the villages He visited. To the contrary, He had twelve men who handled His business. One was the treasurer (John 13:29).

Jesus does not want you to fret and worry about finances. “Therefore, I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for the body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (Mathew 6:25-26).

Jesus knew that God loved to give people good things. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father” (James 1:17).

Money is a fact of life. It is necessary. You need it. Money is on God’s mind. It is taught about in the Word of God. In fact, Jesus spent about 20% teaching about money and finances. God loves to see His people prosper. “Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant” (Psalms 35:27). God wants to reveal ways for you to profit and succeed financially. “I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit” (Isaiah 48:17).

Jesus showed people how to get ahead financially through His parables about using their gifts and wisely investing what He has given them (Matthew 25:14-29).

Remember, your future starts with whatever is in your hand today. Nothing is too little to multiply. Everything is reproductive. Everyone has received something from God which is capable of reproducing.

Jesus taught that giving was one of the ways to multiply what He has given you. “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

Jesus taught fishermen where to drop their nets to catch fish (Luke 5:1-11). The disciples caught more fish than they had ever caught, so much that their nets broke. They had to have partners to help them pull in the fish. The disciples brought their ships to land and decided to totally follow Jesus and His teachings.

Jesus also took the time to show His disciples where to get money to pay their taxes. “Go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take, and give

unto them for Me and thee” (Mathew 17:27).

Jesus showed people where money could be found. He motivated them to try again and consider options and changes. He focused their mind on their true source, the heavenly Father. He encouraged them to make spiritual matters a priority. Then He encouraged them to look at their giving as a seed given in faith to reap the promise of a 100-fold harvest. He encouraged them to expect a harvest from everything they sowed into God’s work by helping set others free.

If there is one thing more exciting than discovering financial freedom God’s way, it is helping others discover His plan for financial freedom too. Jesus was concerned about the finances of people, this was one of His great leadership qualities.

Jesus also was willing to go where He had never been before. Sometimes geography makes a big difference. Atmosphere matters. The climate is important for any seed to grow. You, too, are a Seed. Your gifts and ministry as a Christian leader are like Seeds. You may need to change locations and situations to unlock the full potential of your success as a Christian leader of men.

You will never succeed as a Christian leader without networking with many different kinds of people. You may have to leave the comforts of your home or office to reach them and achieve your success.

Jesus was constantly on the move, constantly changing locations. He came down from the mountain, He entered Capernaum, He came into Peter’s house, He entered a ship, and went to the other side of the country of Gergesenes. Jesus was constantly arising, departing, and going to new places. He sought to be around people. He discussed His teaching with many types of people of varied backgrounds. This is true leadership indeed!

Abraham, the patriarch of the Israelites, had to make geographical changes before

his success was birthed (Genesis 12:1-2). Joseph found his incredible success in another country, Egypt. Ruth willingly left her family in Moab and went to Bethlehem with Naomi. There she met Boaz, a financial giant of the community, and married him.

It is normal to move toward those who are easily accessible. Sometimes you have to go somewhere you have never been before, to achieve the success that you want to be a Christian leader of men.

Jesus also never allowed what others said about Him to change His opinion of Himself. Nobody really knows you but you. Almost everyone in your life is more preoccupied with themselves than you. Therefore, you know more about yourself than anyone who will ever meet you. Always remember this: It is not what men say about you that really matters in life, it is what you believe about yourself.

Jesus was slandered and falsely accused of many things. They said He was possessed with devils. Countless accusations were hurled against Jesus every day of His life, but it never affected Him. “Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast your name as evil, for the Son of man’s sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets” (Luke 6:22-23).

Jesus knew what He was really about. He believed in himself. He believed in His message of salvation. He knew His accusers were ignorant, unlearned and arrogant.

People always fight what they do not understand. The mind will always resent what it cannot master. Wars are fought because of ignorance and fear. Throughout human history, champions have had their name soiled and stained. Accusations and slanderous lies have come against great political leaders as well as ministers. I myself have been falsely accused and been slandered against by many men and women ignorant of the truth. This is life. Daniel was accused of breaking the law. Joseph was

falsely accused of raping his employer's wife. St. Paul was accused of arousing mobs through hatred and division concerning the belief systems of religious people.

Jesus never begged anyone to believe in him. He knew that integrity cannot be proven, it must be discerned. He never wasted time with critics. He kept His attention on His goal. He stayed focused on His mission. These are the marks of a true leader. Jesus never strived to "look good," He simply was good. He did not labor to appear truthful, He was truthful. He never struggled to have a good reputation, He had character.

Every successful leader wants to be beloved and admired, but our enemies and critic will never leave our reputation unstained and untarnished. You must rise above that fact. You must never allow what others say about you to change your personal opinion of yourself. Never!

A true Christian leader must also understand timing and preparation. Remember, champions never hurry. The quality of preparation determines the quality of performance. The world heavyweight boxer knows he cannot get into the ring with his opponent without preparing first. It would be too late. For many weeks before the great fight, he toils in his morning workout, running, and exercise program. Champions do not become champions in the ring. They are merely recognized in the ring. Their becoming happens in their daily routine.

Jesus never hurried, and He did not begin His earthly ministry until He was thirty years old. His ministry was a short three-and one-half years. His preparation time was thirty years. Jesus was very sensitive about timing. When His mother told Him that the people had run out of wine at the marriage of Cana, He replied "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4). Obviously, God was planning a public introduction of Jesus' ministry, but Jesus saw a need and responded to the faith Mary expresses when she said, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5).

Something good is happening every moment of your life. It may be the Seed of patience or a new friendship just birthed. It may also be that the weakness of your plans are being revealed. Whatever it is, each season is producing some specific result from your efforts.

Look for the reward of the present or a failure. Preparation chapters in your life are not delays in your future success as a Christian leader. Each chapter and season of your life has a benefit for you, if you will look for them.

Preparation time is never wasted time. It will take time and preparation to be a successful Christian leader. Jesus saw hundreds around Him die because of sickness and disease, but His time had not come. He saw hundreds warped with the traditions and legalism of religious systems, but He knew His Father was growing Him up. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man: (Luke 2:52). Jesus was willing to wait. He prepared Himself.

Passion is power. You will never have significant success as a Christian leader until it becomes an obsession with you. An obsession is when something consumes your thoughts and time.

Jesus had a passion for His mission and goal in life. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

The obsession of Jesus took Him to the cross, it took Him to the crucifixion. Thorns were crushed into His brow. A spear punctured His side. Spikes were driven into His hands. Thirty-nine stripes of a whip tore His back to shreds. Roman soldiers spit on His body. His beard was ripped off His face. But Jesus was obsessed with the salvation of the whole human race. Through all this, Jesus succeeded!

You may start small and you may start with very little, however, if what you love in being a Christian leader consumes your mind, your thoughts, your conversation, and your schedule, look for extraordinary success. Find something that consumes you in being a Christian leader and build your entire life around it. You must develop a passion for your goals of being a Christian leader.

In order to be a successful Christian leader, you must also respect authority. Authority creates order. Can you imagine a nation without a leader, or a work place without a boss, or an army without a general? Authority creates order, the accurate arrangement of things. Respect those in authority over you, both in the secular life and the Christian life. Your success is affected by it. Honor those who have lived before you, and have been before you in the ministry. They possess a wealth of knowledge that you need to learn. Listen and learn from them.

Mentorship is the master key to extraordinary success. Jesus was the Son of God and He knew more than any other human on earth, however, He honored the authority of the Roman government. When people came to Him questioning His opinion of paying taxes to Caesar, He answered, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17).

Do not speak words of doubt about your civil government, pray for the leaders of your nation. God has put them in authority over you. Honor all men in civil authority. Those in authority may not be perfect. They make mistakes; however, you are to be obedient unto their authority (Romans 13:1-7). If you are rebelling against every instruction given to you, then do not complain when those around you begin to rebel against your words and opinions. As a Christian leader you must learn to honor and respect those in authority over you.

As a Christian leader of men, never discriminate against anyone. Treat people right. Stop prejudging people. Your first impression is always limited, and is possibly very wrong. Only fools make permanent decisions without knowledge of the facts. Never

assume your intuition or perception is always correct. Never eliminate anyone from your chain of success.

Jesus never discriminated because of someone's race, sex, financial status, or appearance. He was comfortable in the presence of fishermen or the tax collectors of His day. He was at ease with men and women, the rich and the poor. He knew that every person contained potential. He never eliminated someone just because of their past. Jesus was born of a mother who conceived Him as a virgin, and He knew what it meant to have a questionable background. He rose above it!

When the Samaritans were considered a lower class of people and the Jews would not even talk to them, Jesus broke with tradition and did. He took the time with the woman of Samaria at the well, discussing her entire life and how He could change it. (John 4:1-42).

As a Christian leader you must remember that your past is over. If you came from a questionable background, let it go and forget it completely. Forget all sins of your past that you have committed. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus. Remember that Jesus was born with a terrible stigma. His mother was pregnant with Him before she was ever married to Joseph. The Bible says that they had not had a sexual relationship, but, "...that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20). Only three people in the world knew that Mary was a virgin, God, Joseph and Mary.

Undoubtedly, hundreds of people mocked and sneered at Joseph for marrying Mary while she was pregnant. Jesus grew up with this. He stepped out of a cesspool of human scorn (John 8:48-49). He ignored the slanderous remarks of those around Him. He knew the truth. He knew who He was and what He was about. It did not matter to Him that others did not believe Him. He chose to chart His own course. The opinions of others did not matter.

Jesus never looked back. He never discussed the situation with anyone. There is

not a single Scripture in the Bible where He ever brought up His background or His limitations. You too can move beyond the scars of yesterday. Stop talking about your limited education. Stop complaining about everyone in your family as poor. Stop repeating the stories of those who have failed you or done you wrong. Stop advertising your pain and meditating on your flaws.

Remember, everyone has limitations. Each of us are handicapped in some way or another: physically, mentally, and spiritually. As a Christian leader you must concentrate on your future, not the failures of your past.

Never waste your time in answering your critics. Remember, critics are spectators and not players. Critical people are usually disheartened people who have failed to reach a desired goal. There has never been a monument built to a critic. Critical people are disappointed people, disillusioned people, and unfocused people. They are hurting inside, and they build their life trying to destroy others.

As a Christian leader you must move away from the critics. Debate is a great arena, and there is a place to present facts. There is a time for exchange of information. Constructive suggestions are always pursued by champions. There is also a time for silence.

When Jesus was being ridiculed and prepared for His crucifixion, He was silent. "But Jesus held His peace" (Matthew 26:63). Jesus did feel obligated to answer His critics. He never wasted time on people who were trying to trap Him. He responded to those who hungered, to those who thirsted, and to those who sought after Him.

As a Christian leader, you owe nothing to a critic. "Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words" (Proverbs 23:9).

Criticism is deadly.

Correction is life.

Criticism is pointing out your flaws.

Correction is pointing out your potential.

There is a right time and a wrong time to approach people.

There is a time for everything.

There is a time to be born.

There is a time to die.

There is a time to plant,

There is a time to pluck up.

There is a time to kill.

There is a time to heal.

There is a time to break down.

There is a time to build up.

There is a time to weep.

There is a time to laugh.

There is a time to mourn.

There is a time to dance.

There is a time to love.

There is a time to hate.

(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

Jesus understood timing. He spent 30 years preparing for His ministry before He launched His first miracle. When His mother told Him that they had no wine at the wedding, Jesus responded to her, "Mine hour is not yet come" (John 2:4).

There is a time to ask for forgiveness. There is a time to be silent. There is a time to make your presentation to people. There is also a time to wait. People are in different seasons of their life. Moods change, and circumstances affect their decisions. As a Christian leader you must be very sensitive to this in people.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven....He hath made everything beautiful in His time" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 11). Your

success, therefore, depends on timing. Do not forget this! Observe, watch, and listen to God and the flow of information and what is going on with people. This will give you the wisdom to know the right time and the wrong time to approach people.

As a Christian leader, you must also educate those you mentor. You will always remember what you teach. It is very important that you mentor someone. Train them and teach them what you know, especially those over whom you have authority who are carrying out an instruction for you.

It is proven that successful businesses have employees who are informed, well trained, and confident about carrying out their instructions. This takes time and energy, and great patience. Every song needs a singer, every achiever needs motivation, and every student needs a teacher.

Jesus was a master teacher of the truth. He taught hundreds at a time. Sometimes He sat with His twelve disciples and fed information to them about the kingdom of God. He kept His disciples motivated, influenced, and inspired. He taught His disciples and others about prayer, about heaven, and about hell. He educated His staff on many topics including His purpose, giving, and relationships.

Jesus taught in the synagogues (Luke 13:10). He taught in the villages (Mark 6:6). None of us were born with great knowledge. You became what you are. You discovered what you know. It took time, energy, and learning. Your staff may not know everything, and they may not see what you see. They may not feel what you feel, and they may not have discovered what you know. You must take the time to nurture their vision, their knowledge, and the rewards you want them to pursue.

You as a Christian leader need good people around you. You need inspired people and informed people around you. You may be their only source for information and motivation. Jesus took the time to educate His staff. He constantly motivated the people He led by showing them the future of their present commitment. Take the time

to train and educate others.

A Christian leader must refuse to be discouraged when others misjudge their motives. Everyone has been misjudged in life one time or another. When a minister speaks on giving, he risks being accused of greed. When he prays for the sick, he risks being called a fraud and a fake. Even your own family may misjudge your motives. Any person who carries out instructions for you may misjudge your actions.

Do not be discouraged by these facts. Take the time to discuss your position as a Christian leader with those who appear genuinely sincere. Do not waste your time and energy on those who are merely stirring up conflict.

Jesus was constantly misjudged by others. The Pharisees accused Him of being possessed by evil spirits. “But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “This fellow doeth cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils” (Matthew 12:24).

When you speak to others, be concise. Be bold but very distinct in what you say. Do not leave room for misunderstanding. Always be where you are. When you are in conversation with someone, totally focus on that conversation, and be sure to look that person in the eyes. Never look down or shift your eyes when speaking to another person. Shut out everything else around you. When you are totally focused on what you are saying and hearing, you do not have to reflect later on with regret about that conversation. This can prevent unnecessary misjudgement.

Every extraordinary achiever has been misjudged. People laughed over the thought of a horseless carriage. Others sneered when the telephone was invented. Remember that your success as a Christian leader is on the other side of scorn and false accusations.

As a Christian leader, refuse to be bitter when others are disloyal or betray you. Bitterness is more devastating than betrayal. Betrayal is external, while bitterness is

internal. Betrayal is something that others do to you, while bitterness is something you do to yourself.

Thousands of people survive betrayal easily. Very few can survive the currents of bitterness. “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Hebrews 12:15).

Disloyalty is a product of an unthankful heart, and betrayal is usually the child of jealousy. Everybody has experienced these tragic situations in their life at one time or another. An unfaithful mate, an employee who slanders you behind your back, or a boss who fires you without an explanation. These things hurt very deeply.

Jesus experienced betrayal in His life. “And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with Me shall betray Me” (Mark 14:18). When Jesus saw Judas was the one who would betray Him, He also saw something more important than the hurt and wounds of betrayal - the redemption of all mankind!

As you read in Mark 14:43-50, you will see one of the most demoralizing experiences any human can experience. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Yet, Jesus refused to be bitter. Neither did Jesus penalize Judas. Judas destroyed himself. Jesus did not disconnect from Peter, who denied Him. Peter cried out for mercy and forgiveness, and he was restored, becoming the great preacher and spiritual leader on the Day of Pentecost in the Upper Room.

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

To be a Christian leader, you must eliminate any words of bitterness in every conversation. Do not remind others of your experience, unless it is to teach and encourage others to rise above their own hurts. Look to the next chapter in your life

beyond betrayal, and refuse to be bitter against anyone.

As a Christian leader you must network with people of all backgrounds. Remember that greatness is everywhere. People have different contributions. You need different kinds of input into your life. Someone needs what you have to offer them. You need something that they can contribute to you. You are the sum total of your experiences.

Personalities differ from one person to another. Each person around you contains a different body of knowledge and experiences in life. It is up to you as a Christian leader to draw from their well of knowledge to the best of your ability. “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14).

Take note of those people who surrounded Jesus. A tax collector, a physician, a fisherman, and a woman possessed with seven devils. Some were poor, wealthy, energetic, while others were passive. Some were explosive like Peter, and others like James, were logical.

You must be willing to listen to others. Everyone sees through different set of eyes. They feel with different hearts. They also hear with different ears. Someone knows something that you should know. You will not discover it until you take the time to stop and hear them out. Just one piece of information can turn a failure into a great success in your life. God gave me a sermon one time and I was searching for a good title to give it. I searched and searched, but could not come up with an appropriate title to fit the message. Then at a minister’s meeting I heard the speaker mention about the heart of a shepherd in caring for his sheep. That was it, I then applied the title of the sermon, “**The Heart of a Shepherd**,” David keeping the sheep while his brothers were waiting to be crowned king of Israel by Samuel. God looked on the heart of David’s brothers, and they failed the heart test. God was looking for the heart of a shepherd to lead Israel. Remember that great decisions are products of great thoughts.

Jesus networked with people of all backgrounds, He had the heart of a shepherd.

This was the secret of His success as a leader of men.

As a Christian leader you must resist all temptations that come your way. Temptation is the presentation of evil. It is an opportunity to choose temporary pleasure rather than permanent gain. You will experience many seasons during your life. During your teenage years, you may feel overwhelming currents of lust toward immorality. In the business world, you will be tempted to distort the truth, cheat on your taxes, or even pocket extra money for yourself.

Satan is a master artist. Billboards boldly declare their invitation to alcohol, and drugs are on every corner. Cocaine appears to be an escape from the complexities of life.

Jesus experienced the relentless and persistent adversary, the devil. After He had fasted for forty days and forty nights, He was tempted by Satan. His defense was quite simple: The written Word of God (Matthew 4:1-11). It is not a sin to be tempted, yielding to the temptation is sin. Adam and Eve were tempted in the Garden of Eden.

The graveyards are full of people who failed to resist Satan. The prisons are full and overcrowded with people too weak to stand against Satan and his temptations. Dreams crash daily on the rocks of temptation.

Move the ship of your life from the rocks of temptation. Ask Samson, and he will tell you, "One night of pleasure is not worth a lifetime of blindness." As a Christian leader, fight back, resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

Never judge people by their outward appearance. Nobody is ever as they first appear. Sometimes even packaging may be deceptive. I bought a can of tomatoes one time in a store and when I opened them at home, it turned out to be canned peas. Somehow, the product was mis-labeled. The contents of the can was not what I saw on the outward label. Never label someone without knowing the content of their character.

Clothing is very important, and appearance sells or discourages. Jesus saw the white robes of the Pharisees, but inward they were full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness (Matthew 23:27). Jesus also saw the weary woman at the well who was married five times, and He saw beyond her failures and reputation. He saw her heart. He saw her desire to be changed. She was the golden bridge for Jesus to walk into the hearts of many of those people of her city. "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that I ever did" (John 4:39).

Remember, nothing is ever as it first appears. Start listening for attitudes in people. Start listening for their hurts, and do not misjudge them. Never, never, judge people by their outward appearance.

As a Christian leader, become a "tomorrow thinker." Jesus was a "tomorrow thinker" when He met the Samaritan woman at the well. He barely mentioned that she had been married five times. He pointed her to her future. Jesus said that He would give her water, and she would never thirst again.

Another example of Jesus being a "tomorrow thinker" concerns the woman caught in the act of adultery. Jesus never discussed her sin with her or others. He simply said unto the woman, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:18-19).

Satan discusses your past. That appears to be the only information he has about you. Jesus discusses your future. He enters your life to end your past and give birth to tomorrow. Stop taking journeys into yesterday, and concentrate on the future.

A Christian leader should know that money alone cannot bring contentment. Your

hands can be full of money, and your head full of information, but if your heart is empty, your life is empty. Money is for movement, not accumulation. That is why the Bible talks about “the deceitfulness of riches.”

Jesus talked to the rich of this world, and He looked into their eyes and saw a longing for something that money could not buy. They came to Him late at night, when the crowds were gone. They were lonely. “For a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15). Even Solomon was a wealthy king, yet he confessed, “Therefore, I hated life” (Ecclesiastes 2:17).

Jesus knew “the eyes of man are never satisfied” (Proverbs 27:20). He knew that money alone could not bring contentment in the life of people.

As a Christian leader, you must know the power of words and the power of silence. Words are not cheap. “He that hath knowledge spareth his words” and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding” (Proverbs 17:27-28).

Wars begin because of words. Peace comes when great men get together and negotiate and dialogue. Words link people together. Words are the bridge into your future. Words create the world (Genesis 1:3-31) Words create your world (Proverbs 18:21). Jesus said that your words reveal what kind of heart you possess, “For of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luke 6:45).

Jesus said that words can move mountains (Mark 11:23). Remember, there is a time to talk, and there is a time to listen. There is a time for movement, and there is a time for staying still. When people were hungry for knowledge, Jesus spoke and taught for hours, but when He got to Pontius Pilate’s hall, where truth was ignored, He was silent.

Your words matter. Conversation matters. “But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37).

To be a Christian leader, you must be silent about injustices to you. Be silent in discussing the weakness of others. Be silent in advertising your own mistakes. You must know when to talk and when to listen.

You need to know that when you want something you have never had, you have to do something you have never done before. Everything is difficult at first. When you were beginning to crawl, it was very difficult. When you took your first step and fell, that was difficult.

Thousands of people will fail in life because they are unwilling to make changes. They refuse to change jobs, towns, or friendships. They stay in their comfort zones. Yet there are thousands of people who move up the ladder of success and happiness, because they are willing to go through a little discomfort to experience a new level in life.

Peter wanted to walk on water. Jesus saw his excitement, then He gave a simple instruction for Peter to do something he had never done before. “And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down from the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus” (Matthew 14:29).

Jesus always gave people something to do, and it was always something they had never done before. He knew that their obedience was the only proof of their faith in Him.

Israel did something they had never done before, they marched around the walls of Jericho seven days in a row, and then seven times on Sunday (Joshua 6). The leper

had to dip in the Jordan river seven times, something he had never done before, and he was healed.

Elijah stretched the faith of the widow, who was down to her last meal. Two pancakes before death, he motivated her to do something she had never done before: Give out of the little she had to someone she did not even know and believe the word of God's prophet for her future provision in the midst of famine. She saw the miracle come to pass (I Kings 17).

Jesus knew how to stretch people's faith. He motivated them. He helped them to do things they had never done before, in order to create things they had never had. He knew when you want something you have never had, you have to do something you have never done.

As a Christian leader you must permit others to correct their own mistakes. Everybody makes mistakes. You can examine the biographies of multi-millionaires. Many have experienced bankruptcy several times. They simply discovered that failure is not fatal, as failure is merely an option.

Jesus never disconnected from those who made mistakes with their lives. Peter was one of His favorite disciples, yet Peter denied Him, and then confessed his sin, and Jesus forgave him. Jesus allowed Peter to correct his mistake. Peter went on and became one of the greatest apostles in the history of the early church.

King David committed adultery with Bathsheba and God forgave him. God allowed David to correct his mistake after the prophet Samuel came to him.

You must learn to forgive yourself and learn to forgive others around you. Everybody hurts somewhere. Their mistakes stay on their mind. You must be a Christian leader and give them another chance to correct their mistakes. Mistakes are **correctable**.

As a Christian leader you must also know your worth, know your gift. Many people around you may never discover you. It is not really important that they do. What is important is that you discover yourself, your gifts and your talents. Popularity is when other people like you and happiness is when you like yourself.

When Jesus visited the home of Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, Martha was busy with housework and was agitated with Mary who was simply sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to every word He said. When Martha complained, Jesus replied, "Mary hath chosen that good part" (Luke 10:42). Jesus knew His personal worth. He knew that His own words were life. He was incredibly self-confident and expected to be treated well.

Jesus honored those who discerned His worth. Jesus even reacted favorable to a woman who washed His feet. "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment" (Luke 7:44-46).

As a Christian leader, you must never try to succeed alone. You need people, and you need God. Everything you have came from God. Your success is a collection of relationships. Without patients, a doctor has no one to heal. Without a composer, a singer has nothing to sing.

Your future and success as a Christian leader is connected to people, so develop people skills. Jesus constantly talked to his Heavenly Father. He talked to His disciples. He talked to everybody. At the age of twelve, He exchanged with the scribes and priests in the Temple. He talked to tax collectors, fishermen, doctors, and lawyers. He said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30).

You need problem solvers in your life. You need a good doctor, a good lawyer and a good financial advisor. You need the members of your own family. When I began Apostolic Temple church, I started with family members only. Your family may be very important to you, treat them well. Listen to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit today and obey every instruction given to you. Never try to succeed in life and be a Christian leader alone, you need people.

You must set specific goals in your life and ministry. Decide what you really want to do and to achieve. When you decide exactly “what” you want, the “how to do it” will emerge.

Jesus knew His purpose and mission in life. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost’ (Luke 19:10). He knew the product He had to offer to others. “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Jesus had a sense of destiny. He knew where he wanted to go, and He knew where people needed Him (John 4:3). You must set specific goals in your life in order to be a successful Christian leader.

You must also know that every great achievement requires a willingness to begin small. Everything big starts little. An oak tree began as an acorn. You began as a tiny embryo from your mother’s womb.

Be willing to begin small. Start with what you have. Everything you possess is a starting point. Do not be like the man in the Bible who had one talent and refused to use it. Use whatever you have been given, and more will come to you.

I have seen many preachers sitting around in another Pastor’s church waiting to be called to pastor a large church with a big congregation. They sit and sit and sit. Many refuse to start a small work in a storefront somewhere. I did not sit around waiting for

an opening in a large church somewhere. I went out and rented a building and started teaching Search for Truth lessons to my neighbors, and in one years time we had an attendance of 45 people. Many were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and received the Holy Ghost.

You my friend, must be willing to start small if necessary to become a Christian leader of men. Jesus began in a stable. But He did not stay there. He went thirty years without performing miracles, but, one day He launched His first miracle, and the rest is history.

David only had a small slingshot, but he used it to defeat Goliath, and became a king. Joseph was sold as a slave, but he soon became the Prime Minister of Egypt. The widow of Zarephath had a small pancake, but she sowed it into the work of God and created a continuous supply during the famine.

Whatever you have been given is enough to create anything else you have been promised. "For who hath despised the day of small things?" (Zechariah 4:10). Whatever you possess today is enough to create anything else you will ever want in your future.

Jesus knew that every great achievement requires a willingness to begin small. This is a secret of being a great Christian leader.

You must also hurt when others hurt. If someone close to you is in trouble, have you really noticed it? Does it matter to you at all? Everybody hurts somewhere. When others hurt, try to feel it. You are a solution to somebody with a problem. Find them and listen for their cry.

Read the passage of Scripture in Luke 10:30-37, and see where a certain man went down to Jericho and fell among thieves. He was beaten, stripped of his garments and left for dead. Many people passed by and would not help him. They didn't want to get

involved with someone else's hurt and pain. They were not Christian leaders of men. It was an outcast Samaritan man who showed mercy and compassion on the man beaten and wounded. He showed great Christian leadership and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and took him to an inn and took care of him.

You my friend, may hold the key to someone's hurt. You may be someone's life line. Jesus did. Jesus did not hide in the palace. He was not a recluse. He walked where people walked and was hurt when others were hurting. He felt their pain and suffering. "And Jesus went forth, and saw the multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick (Matthew 14:14).

You will begin to succeed in life as a Christian leader when the hurts and problems of other people begin to matter to you.

You must also not be afraid to show your feelings to other people. Emotions dictate world events. An angered world leader attacks another country. Angry airline employees have a picket line at airports. A mother whose child is killed by a drunk driver launches a national campaign. Thousands are rallying to stop the abortions of millions of babies.

Feelings do matter in life. Jesus was not afraid to express Himself. When He was infuriated, others knew it. "And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves..and when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple...and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables" (John 2:13-15)

Jesus was deeply moved with compassion when He saw the multitudes wandering aimlessly without direction. "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherds" (Matthew 9:36).

The Bible even records that Jesus wept openly. “And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it” (Luke 19:41).

I am not writing about an uncontrolled temper, neither am I referring to someone who sobs and breaks down every time a problem occurs in their life. Rather, I am asking that you notice Jesus did not bottle up His emotions. He was enthusiastic when He saw a demonstration of faith, and He wept when He saw unbelief.

Peter was affected by it. The apostle Paul was set on fire by it, and they changed the course of history. Be bold in expressing your opinions. Feel strongly about the things that matter in life. You can be a marvelous influence for good.

You will always be drawn to people who are expressive. Thousands scream at rock concerts, and football games. Don't be a spectator of life. Get into the arena, and don't be afraid to show your personal feelings.

As a Christian leader you must know the power of habit. Great men simply have great habits. Habit is a gift from God. It simply means anything you do twice becomes easier. It is God's key in helping you succeed as a Christian leader of men.

Jesus stayed busy. He traveled. He prayed for the sick. He taught and ministered to the people. He supervised His disciples. He spoke to large crowds. However, He had an important custom and habit. “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16).

Daniel prayed three times a day (Daniel 6:10). The psalmist prayed seven times daily (Psalm 119:164). The disciples of Jesus met on the first day of each week (Acts 20:7).

As a Christian leader you must finish what you started. Champions are finishers. It

is fun to be creative. It is exciting to always be giving birth to new ideas, thinking of new places to go, but real champions complete things. They are follow-through people.

Jesus was thirty years old when He started His ministry. His ministry went for three and one-half years. He performed many miracles, and touched many lives. He electrified the world through twelve men.

But in the thousands of Scriptures is a golden principle that revealed His power. It happened on the day of His crucifixion. He was taunted by thousands. A spear was thrust into His side, and spikes were driven into His hands. Thorns were crushed into His brow, and blood had dried on His hair. His whole body was covered with blood.

That was when He uttered perhaps the greatest sentence ever uttered on earth: “**It is finished**” (John 19:30). The sins of man could now be forgiven. He had paid the price in His blood. The plan for redemption was now complete. He was the Lamb led to the slaughter.

He was the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). The Prince of Peace had come (Isaiah 9:6). Our great High Priest, the Son of God, was our golden link to the God of Heaven (Hebrews 4:14).

Jesus was a finisher. He finished what He started. The bridge that linked man to God was now complete. Man could now approach God without fear. The apostle Paul was a finisher (2 Timothy 4:7). Get the spirit of a finisher. “He that endureth to the end shall be saved. (Matthew 10:22).

As a Christian leader, never get into a hurry. Impatience is costly. We now live in an impatient generation. Fast foods, microwave ovens, and crowded freeways reflect this philosophy.

Your greatest mistakes will happen because of impatience. Most businesses that fail

do so because of lack of preparation and time. Great businesses do not happen overnight. Even this great country of ours took years to become an independent nation.

Take the time to be a successful Christian leader. This will not happen overnight. Be deliberate with your projects and become a “long-termer.” Remember, that life is a marathon, and not a fifty-yard dash. Champions pace themselves.

Jesus refused to be rushed by the emergencies of others. There are no Scriptures recorded that show He was hurried or ever in a state of emergency. Consider the time when word was sent to Jesus that one of His close friends, Lazarus, was sick. Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, wanted Jesus to hurry and pray for his healing before he died. Jesus kept His own agenda, an unhurried and unrushed agenda. Lazarus died.

“Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha...whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore, his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, He said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that Lazarus was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again. And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, loose him and let him go” (John 11:1-6).

Decisiveness is powerful and magnetic, but Jesus never made decisions due to pressure tactics from others. Refuse to be intimidated by statements such as, “This is the last one available this year. If you don’t buy it now, you may not get another chance.”

Skilled negotiators teach that waiting is a weapon. Whoever is the most hurried and impatient usually ends up with the worst end of the deal. Take the time to do things in your life right. The weakness and flaws of any plan are often buried by flurry and hurry.

As a Christian leader you should go to where you are celebrated instead of where you are tolerated. Never stay where you are not valued. Never stay where you have not been assigned. Treasure your gift. Guard well any talent God has given to you. Know this - God has prepared those to receive you when you are at the place of your assignment.

In some Christian circles and organizations, you may not be valued, and even shunned. If this is the case, then you need to move on.

Even Jesus was unable to do any miracle in certain cities. The people doubted Him and ask that He move on. (Luke 8:37). Unbelief was like a cancer in the atmosphere. It stopped Him from releasing the healing flow. Jesus taught His disciples to disconnect from any place that did not see their worth. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet" (Matthew 10:14).

It is foolish to waste your entire life on those who do not celebrate you, or fellowship you. This is the time for you to move on! Even Jesus went to where He was celebrated instead of where He was tolerated.

As a Christian leader you need to know that prayer generates results. Prayer always works. Satan dreads your prayer link to God. He will attempt to sabotage it in any way possible. Make a daily appointment with God. This is what Daniel did. (Daniel 6:10).

Jesus prayed during the time of crises. Just before His crucifixion, He prayed three different times to His Father (Matthew 26:44). He even taught His disciples on how to pray. (Matthew 6:9-13).

If necessary, keep a prayer list of people that are in need of prayer. Set a special time each day, and have a special place to pray if possible. Don't forget the prayer of agreement. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:19).

Remember the old saying, "The early bird gets the worm." Be sure to rise up early in the morning. Famous and successful men usually get up early in the morning. They get an early start every day. Sleeping until noon will leave you sluggish and throw off your timing of the day.

Jesus rose up early. "And in the morning rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35). Jesus consulted His heavenly Father before He consulted anyone else.

Joshua rose early. "And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord" (Joshua 6:12).

Even Moses and Abraham rose up early in the morning. (Exodus 8:20, Genesis 19:27).

You think more clearly early in the morning. You can focus. Your day is uncluttered. Your lifestyle may be an exception to this rule. Many people work all night and use their daytime for sleeping. But for the most part, most of us have discovered the greatest hours of our day are early, when we are uncluttered with the demands of others.

As a Christian leader, never feel that you have to prove yourself to anyone. You are already important in the sight of God. You have nothing to prove to anyone. You have the mind of Christ. Your gifts and talents have been placed within you. Find what they are, celebrate them, and use them for the glory of God. Find the ways to use your gifts to improve others and help them achieve their dreams and goals.

But never, never exhaust and waste your time and energy trying to prove something to somebody else. Worth must be discerned.

Jesus knew this. Satan tempted Him. “If Thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:3-4).

Jesus unstopped deaf ears. He opened the eyes of the blind. He made the lame to walk again. He raised the dead. Sinners were changed. Yet, the jeers of the doubters continued to scream in His ears at His crucifixion. “Thou that destroyed the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matthew 27:40).

What was the reaction of Jesus? He was confident of His worth. He knew His purpose. He refused to let the taunts of ignorant men change His plans.

You my friend, are not responsible for anything but an honest effort to please God. Keep focused on this fact. Remember, that Jesus felt He never had to prove Himself to anyone.

If possible avoid unnecessary confrontations. Stay away from unnecessary conflicts. It is exhausting and unproductive. Quarreling and arguing are a waste of time. Millions of dollars have been lost in negotiations because of an argumentative spirit. Warfare is costly, and nobody really wins.

Jesus knew the emptiness of anger. “And all they in the synagogue, when they had heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He passing through the midst of them went His way” (Luke 4:28-30).

Jesus went His way. He did not oppose them, and did not fight with them. He had other plans. He was about His Father's business. He focused on His own goals. "And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath days" (Luke 4:31).

Jesus did not withdraw into depression. He did not enter into unnecessary dialogue with them. He did not cower into a corner of His parent's home. He proceeded toward His mission and purpose of life.

Jesus never compromised, nor feared argument. His use of the whip in the Temple reflected His strength and war against evil. However, He did not waste His energy on trivial conflicts that did not merit His attention.

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:17-19).

Learn to keep your mouth shut. "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles" (Proverbs 21:23). Jesus was a peacemaker, and we are to do the same.

As a Christian leader you may at times have to delegate. You must know your limitations. It is more productive to set ten men to work than for you to do the work of ten men. Delegation is simply giving others necessary instructions and motivating to complete a particular task. This takes time and it takes patience. But it is a long-term benefit.

* Jesus delegated to the multitudes. He instructed His disciples to have the people sit down.

He gave the loaves and fishes to His disciples for distribution (Matthew 14:19).

- * Jesus sent His disciples to get a donkey (Matthew 21:2).
- * Jesus gave instructions to a blind man to complete his healing (John 9:6-7).
- * Jesus sent His disciples into cities to prepare for special meals (Mark 14:12-15).

The church leaders understood the importance of delegating.

“And in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:1-4).

Take the time to motivate and educate those you work with so they know exactly what you expect. Take the time to delegate, and you will be a successful leader of men.

You must also carefully guard your personal schedule. Your daily agenda is your life. You cannot save time, and you cannot collect it. You cannot place time in a special bank vault. You are only permitted to spend it, wisely or foolishly. You must do something positive with your time. You will invest it, or you will waste it.

Many people have a hidden agenda. There will be people around you who will try to pull you “off course.” There will also be those who are not seeing the “big picture.” They will try to draw you into the crises of the moment and get you off track. You must be careful to protect your list of priorities.

As I mentioned earlier about the story in the Bible about Lazarus, Mary, and Martha,

we will note that Jesus deliberately delayed His coming. He kept His own schedule, and He tenaciously held to His agenda. He did not allow emergencies of others to get Him off track. He guarded His list of priorities.

Make today count for you. Avoid distractions, and protect your schedule. This is your life. Make it happen!

You must also ask questions to accurately determine the needs and desires of others around you. Ask questions, and interrogate your world. Insist on listening to the opinions and needs of others. Almost nobody on earth listens to others or questions them.

Jesus asked questions. Once in the Bible, Peter went fishing. He caught nothing. When the morning came, Jesus was standing on the shore. He called out, "Children, have ye any meat?" (John 21:5). He assumed nothing. He pursued information.

Jesus' question was a link to their future. It was a bridge for their relationship. He then instructed them, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find" (John 21:6).

Document the needs of others around you. If necessary, keep a notebook of their needs and desires. Who are those who need you? Are you really listening to them?

Jesus pursued information. He asked questions to accurately determine the needs and desires of others. He asked blind Bartimaeus, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" (Luke 10:51).

As a Christian leader, you must always be truthful with people. Someone has said, "Tell the truth the first time, and you will never have to try and remember what you said." Truth will always outlast the storms of slander and false accusations.

Carefully build and forge before your family and others around you the picture of total truth. Nothing is more important in life than believability. When you lose that, you have lost the essence of favor, love and success.

Jesus was the Truth. “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6). His integrity intimidated hypocrites, They reacted to His purity. Honesty is a force. It will destroy the mountains of prejudice and fear in a single blow. “God is not a man, that He should lie: neither the son of man, that He should repent; hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19).

You as a Christian leader must stay in the center of your expertise, and do what you do the best. You must answer these important questions in your life. What do you love to do? What do you love to talk about? What would you rather hear about more than anything else on earth? What would you do with your life if money was not a factor? What do you do best of all? Your joy is determined by doing what you love.

Jesus associated Himself with fishermen. He talked to tax collectors. Doctors, lawyers, and religious leaders were regularly in His life. But He never wavered from His focus. “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him: (Acts 10:38).

Jesus knew His mission, and He stayed focused. I really believe that broken focus is the real reason men fail. Some people take jobs they are not qualified to do and become miserable. What you love to do is the clue to your calling and talent.

As a Christian leader, you must accept the responsibility for the mistakes of those under your authority. Realize that people make mistakes. After all, this is not a perfect world. Your friendships are not flawless. Those who work with you and are around you will make mistakes.

Remember, you are mentoring those who receive your instructions. They are in the process of growing. They are learning, and they will sometimes stumble and make mistakes. Some of them may also be costly mistakes.

Peter denied the Lord, yet Jesus lovingly said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:31-32).

Great leaders accept the responsibility of their troops. If you are going to be a great Christian leader of men, you are going to have to be strong and courageous enough to take the responsibility for the mistakes of those who are in the process of learning from you. Do not whine at them. Do not complain. Be strong in the Lord!

You must also pursue the mentorship of more experienced men in your life. Mentors are teachers in your life. Mentors are not perfect people. They simply have experienced life and are capable of transferring that knowledge to you. Your mentor can be older or younger than yourself. Your mentor is anyone capable of growing and increasing your life for the good.

I will always remember the mentor I had at the start of my ministry over 40 years ago. This pastor lived in California and was older than I. He was well experienced in the ministry and the Apostolic doctrines. I was well grounded on the Apostolic doctrines by his leadership, and I owe him a great debt of gratitude to this day.

Some have said, “show me your mentors, and I can predict your future.” “A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels” (Proverbs 1:5).

Jesus sought knowledge. When He was twelve years of age, He pursued the teachers of His day. “And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them

questions” (Luke 2:46).

“And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:48-49).

Ruth listened to the advise of Naomi. Esther listened to Mordecai. David sat at the feet of Samuel. Joshua received instructions from Moses. Timothy was mentored by Paul. Elisha ran to stay in the presence of Elijah.

Solomon said, “Where no council is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20).

Listen to your mentors, and sit in their presence. Purchase their tapes and their lectures. Absorb their books. One sentence can be the golden door to the next season of your life.

Do not permit those who you lead to show disrespect. Never tolerate strife in your ministry. Strife will not go away voluntarily. You must confront it. You will never correct what you are unwilling to confront. Always name rebellion for what it is. Pinpoint rebellion. When there is a rebel in your company, discern it. Mark those who create strife. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

Jesus loved people, and He cherished hours with His disciples. He was a listener. He was gracious and humble, but He was quite aware of something that every successful person should remember: familiarity can often incubate disrespect.

One day, Peter began to feel extra comfortable with Jesus. Comfortable enough to

correct Him. “Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee Lord; this shall not be unto Thee” (Matthew 16:22).

Suddenly, the gentle and kind Jesus revealed His nature of steel. He was immovable. He was unshakable. In a single stroke of communication, He stripped Peter of his cockiness. Peter had presumed on the relationship. Jesus had never given him the authority to correct Him. “But He turned, and said unto Peter, get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:23).

Jesus did not tolerate disrespect. You see, rebellion is contagious. One rebel can destroy thousands of people. Confront those who cause contention and division. Do not expect them to fade into the sunset, as they usually never do.

Your ministry and leadership depends on a peaceful and happy climate. You must be aware of signs of discontent. Deal with it before it spreads like a virus throughout your church or organization. People rarely respect and follow anyone they are capable of intimidating, dominating or manipulating.

As a Christian leader, you must respect the law of sowing and reaping. Everything begins with a seed to sow. Someone plants a small acorn, and it becomes a mighty oak tree. A small kernel of corn is planted, and it produces two cornstalks. Each stalk produces two ears of corn. Each ear of corn contains over seven hundred kernels of corn. From that one small kernel of corn, a seed, 2,800 more kernels are created.

Look at Seed as anything that can multiply and become more. Love is a Seed. Money is a Seed. Everything you possess can be planted back into the world as a Seed.

Your Seed is anything you give that benefits another person, a smile, time, a word of encouragement, or money. Your Harvest is anything God gives back that benefits you,

joy, peace of mind, a friend, or finances.

Sowing a Seed in faith simply means to give something, having faith God will honor His Word and give you a Harvest of what you have given to Him.

Sowing a Seed in faith is using what you have been given to obtain what God has promised. If you sow the Seed of diligence in your ministry, your Harvest will be abundantly. “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat” (Proverbs 13:4). “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich” (Proverbs 10:4).

When you sow love into your family, you will reap love. When you sow finances into the work of God, you will reap God’s blessings and provision on your finances.

Jesus taught that giving was the beginning of blessings. “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38). When you give, people around you start wanting to give to you.

Everything you have, came from God. Everything you will receive in your future will come from God. He is your total source for everything in your life. Never, never forget this!

God wants you to have His blessings. “For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11). “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (III John 2).

The secret of your future is determined by the Seeds you sow today. When you open your heart, God will open His windows. Never forget that 10 percent of your income is

Holy Seed. It is called "The Tithe." "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and He shall not destroy the fruits of your ground" (Malachi 3:10-11).

You can give your way out of trouble. Your Seed can create what God has promised you. Remember, God had a Son, Jesus Christ. He sowed Him in the earth to produce a family of Christians. Millions are born again today because of His best Seed.



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