



LEADING OURSELVES

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a day and age where we don't see many good examples of leadership. Yet we need people to be leading like we've never needed it before. Certainly, in the life of the local church and with God's people, we need strong, good, godly leadership.

One of the things I'm realizing more and more is the need to actually lead our own life first. *Leadership starts with your life.* If you can't lead your own life you can never lead others. Therefore, I've become convinced that one of the most important leadership principles is self-leadership.

Longevity is essential for a testimony of the faithfulness of God, but we tend to underplay it. We see many start well, do great things – big things -- but at the end of the day they bomb out, they somehow lose their way. Our character is assessed by the question of "how long" - how long you've been doing what you're doing. It's not just about whether we've started but whether we've also finished.

It amazes me that when you look at what Paul reflects on at the end of his life in the scriptures, you find it's often very different to what we

deem is important!

2 Timothy 4:6-8

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

Notice how he doesn't reflect on how many churches he has planted, how many regions he visited, how many nations he preached in, or even how many letters he wrote. You never find Paul reflecting on these things in any of his letters. The things we often regard as the most important are things Paul doesn't even bring into the equation. Rather, he goes back to this: "I've fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith."

That should make us think about our own lives! While there is such a thing as godly ambition and we need to pursue the things God has called us to do, too often we reflect on the things that don't even matter at the expense of what matters most. I want this said of me: "He finished the race." Not "he survived". Too many are "surviving". Paul didn't survive, he thrived. He was walking in all that God had for him.

And then he finished, never losing his faith! So it can be done.

Are you settled in your call?

The question we've got to keep asking ourselves in leadership is this: are we settled in our call? This is vital for us to finish our race. If we have settled in the call that God has given us we are going to be able to really help others and not be intimidated, bringing them through and never losing our way, burning out, trying to be someone that God hasn't called us to be.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Am I doing what I should be doing?
2. Am I who I should be?
3. Am I not trying to be someone else?
4. Am I rather trying to be who God has made me to be?
5. Am I where I should be?

Self-leadership determines everything about our longevity. I'm convinced that *our ministry follows our lives - it flows from our lives - and our lives don't follow or flow from our ministry*. Too many leaders are trying to make their ministry great, but if your life is in the right place and you are living it correctly, your ministry will flow out of your life and you will stay the course.

Watch your life

In **1 Timothy 4:16**, Paul tells Timothy this:

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

You must watch your life *and* doctrine. Don't just watch your doctrine but also your life! Don't just be good at watching everyone else and their life and doctrine either!

Not enough of us are putting correct emphasis on watching our lives. Note Paul's departing words to the Ephesian elders in **Acts 20:28**:

"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."

As leaders and overseers, we are very good at watching over everyone else, but actually we must first watch ourselves. This is because it's your life from where your ministry flows out.

Proverbs 4:20-27

*"My son, pay attention to what I say;
turn your ear to my words."*

*Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;
for they are life to those who find them
and health to one's whole body.
Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.
Keep your mouth free of perversity;
keep corrupt talk far from your lips.
Let your eyes look straight ahead;
fix your gaze directly before you.
Give careful thought to the paths for your feet
and be steadfast in all your ways.
Do not turn to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil."*

This quote from Proverbs provides us some insight into how we watch our lives. Here we see that we ought to *guard our heart, watch our words, watch our eyes, watch our feet, and be careful where we go and what we're moving in.*

In this short book I'll expound on several keys of leading ourselves that help us to watch our life. Briefly, they are:

- 1. Leading your relationships**
- 2. Leading your spiritual life**
- 3. Taking care of your physical body**
- 4. Taking care of your mental health**
- 5. Watching against the subtle destroyers of ministry**

We will expound on these in more detail. You can also watch the video versions of these at YouTube - the link to these is below.



SCAN, TAP OR CLICK ON THE QR CODE ABOVE TO GO TO THE "LEADING OURSELVES" VIDEO BLOG SERIES ON YOUTUBE. YOU CAN GET A QR-CODE READER FOR FREE ON YOUR PHONE'S APP STORE – JUST SEARCH FOR "QR CODE".

Chapter 2:

LEADING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

When it comes to leading ourselves, the first thing we must address is our relationships. *Everything we're involved in is relational.* The gospel, from Genesis right through to Revelation, is all about relationship. Jesus came to this earth to restore our relationship with the Father. That's why he went to the cross and died, and why he rose.

God made us relational beings. It amazes me how many leaders in ministry have terrible relationships. We've got to watch our various relationships and lead well in this area.

Here are the relationships you ought to be leading in:

1. YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

It's obvious that our most important relationship is our relationship with God. We all know this, but yet our general practice seems to show otherwise. Here are a few important points to consider:

a. How is your relationship with God?

Those of us in leadership and in ministry often fall into a trap where our relationship with God is based on our next sermon or involvement

in ministry. This can't be. We have to lead in this area of our relationship with God.

b. Do you still long for God?

Psalm 42:1,2

"As the deer pants for streams of water,

so my soul pants for you, my God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When can I go and meet with God?"

Does this Psalm still echo in your heart? Is God still your priority? Do you long for a long times with him? Or do you live on stolen moments? These are good questions to pause and think about.

c. Do you realize your walk with the Lord determines all of your relationships?

Quite frankly *you cannot have a good relationship with God and be a jerk to everyone else*. If you are being a jerk to others, the trouble is your relationship with God, and you better stop lying to yourself that things are well.

If your relationship is right with God, you will find your relationships working out here on earth, and this is a clear principle throughout scripture.

d. No one can help you in your relationship with God

People can encourage and challenge you, but your relationship with God is ultimately up to you. How much time you give him, the priority of that time, your involvement with God, how much you pursue God – all that is up to you.

e. Are you longing for more?

Philippians 3:8,9 NLT

"Everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him."

Does this verse also echo in your heart? Are you learning more about Christ in your walk and enjoying the journey you have with Jesus?

We cannot overlook these things. Our ministry will flow from our relationship with the Lord. A lot of what we are involved in is because of our direct relationship with God. Let it flow and spend time with Him. Enjoy this Father, this great God, this amazing relationship we're called to have. We're not called to a relationship to ministry, but with God, and ministry will flow out of that relationship.

2. YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SPOUSE

In reality, my relationship with my wife determines much more than I probably realize. God is a restoring God, that's true, but we cannot minister to the world if we are not able to lead our spouse. If you are not married, be careful who you marry, but if you are married you need to ask: how is your relationship with your spouse?

a. We are equal in call and ministry

Genesis 1:27 NLT

"So God created human beings in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;

male and female he created them."

God created male and female, and gave Adam his call before he gave him his spouse. God then said that it wasn't good for man to be alone, so he put Adam to sleep and took out one of Adam's ribs and formed his spouse. Note he didn't take something from the head (above him) or from the foot (under him) but from Adam's *side*. That speaks of equality. (See Genesis 2:8-25.)

We are equal - men and women. Equal in God's economy, equal in dignity, and equal in the effects of the curse. Both men and women get old! We are equal in destiny but *different in our responsibilities*. Today, men are trying to be like women and women are trying to be

like men, but God created us to be different and we ought to celebrate those things that make us different. God's creation is beautiful, so let's celebrate it!

b. Our spouse is not our ministry

God gave the man a call and he gave him a helper to fulfill that call. *"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" (Genesis 2:18.)* There is nothing in scripture that shows our spouses are our ministry. Rather, we are called to fulfill a ministry in the Kingdom together. Our spouses don't serve us, they help us serve God and the call that he has given us.

3. YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILDREN

How is your relationship with your children (if you have children, of course)? We need to encourage our children, speak life over them, and involve them in what we're doing.

a. Doing the prophetic things prophetically

I was taught by my parents that we need to do the prophetic things prophetically. If you're in ministry you need to be wise about bringing your children to meetings, because you are setting them up for victory or failure.

For example, if your church is having a prayer meeting and you don't

bring your children, you're telling your children, even at a young age, that prayer is not important. But if you bring them they see the need and understand the value, and they will carry that value because you lived accordingly, and they saw you live accordingly, and it wasn't just a matter of you telling them that you live that way.

This isn't legalism, it's just doing the prophetic things prophetically. Think about the future - their future - and live accordingly.

b. Speak life over your children

We need to be affectionate to our children. I have three sons and I love them and I want to show them that I love them. I encourage them and tell them I'm proud of them, for nothing - they don't have to do amazing things for me to be proud of them. They're my children! They hear so many negative things, and our cultures across the earth speak so much negativity over them, but we must encourage them and speak life over them. God has entrusted us to lead our children well, to be examples to them.

c. Children are not our ministry

Again, it's clear to me, from scripture, that children are not our ministry. *"Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them."* (Psalm 127:4,5.) Children are a blessing from God but not our ministry. God knows

what we've been called to and knows what we need, and our children are part of our ministry, they don't become our ministry.

4. YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

How are you doing in these three relationships above - with God, with your spouse, with your children? *These three relationships will express and form how your relationships with others will be.* It's healthy and good to have relationships with friends and even people outside your church and ministry. Ask yourself these questions:

a. Do you have people around you? Do you have friends?

b. Are you accountable to people around you?

c. Do you allow people to get close to you? Do you allow them to speak into your life?

It amazes me how unaccountable many church leaders are today. The reality is that, for our own good, we ought to make ourselves vulnerable and submit to other people who can speak into our lives and be our friends. This is not just for your spouse to do but for same-sex people - friends - who can speak into your life and encourage you. Do you have friendships? Are they growing? Are you learning about yourself through your relationships?

- a. What about your relationship with the leadership team that you're involved in?**
- b. What about your relationship with the local church you are involved in?**
- c. What about your relationships with other churches and other pastors and other ministries, or at your workplace, etc.?**

All these things are vital and strategic. Our relationships determine a whole lot about our ministry. We cannot have a history of broken relationships all over the world and think we are doing the will of God! While it's true that some might not walk the journey with us, we must be contending for our friendships and relationships and understand that God is a God of relationships.

So as you lead yourself, give attention to your relationships.

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- a. What's going well in my relationship with God?
- b. What's not going so well?

Then fix it.

- c. What's going well in my marriage?

d. What's not going so well?

Then fix it.

e. What's going well on in my relationships with my children and my family life? what is good?

f. What's not so good in my family life?

Then fix it.

g. What's going well in my relationships with those I consider friends?

h. What's not going so well with them?

Then fix it.

We must give attention to these things because they will determine whether, and how, we finish the race that God has called us to.

Chapter 3:

LEADING YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

How are you doing spiritually? We need to develop the ability to resource ourselves so that we fill our own 'wells' - refreshing, living water we can draw from. When it comes to our spirituality we need our wells to become deeper and the water to become purer.

Many times it has been said that *your leadership height won't exceed your spiritual depth*, and that's incredibly important for us to remember. In leadership we're always pouring ourselves out and giving to others, and we better be filling our wells and refreshing ourselves otherwise we won't be able to stay the course. Or, even more dangerously, we will begin to want the people we are shepherding to resource us, when, in fact, we are meant to be a well of resource for them.

The life of God always draws people

If you've ever visited the great land of Australia you will notice that in the Outback there's a tremendous amount of open space where there is literally nothing. There you will find cattle farms, and you will see how all the animals group together despite the lack of fences or other means of controlling them. Ask any Australian cattle farmer why it is

that they have endless miles of open space and very few fences, but all their cattle stay together, and they will tell you that their role is not to put up fences but to dig fresh wells. Because wherever there is a fresh well the animals will congregate, drink from it, and stay there.

This is a great picture for our own lives and ministries. We don't have to put up fences to keep people involved. If we just keep digging wells, our own wells, fresh water will always be available. The life of God always draws people into what we're involved in.

What stops up our wells?

In Genesis 26:15 we see that Isaac had to open the wells of his father Abraham, wells that had been stopped up by the Philistines. There are things that will stop up your wells, your refreshment in your life.

We've got to keep digging our wells. We need wells that sustain us, sustain our ministry, sustain our family life, sustain our leadership, sustain all that were involved in. There are no shortcuts here - we still have to be making time, spending time with God, and seeing the need to resource ourselves from our own wells.

What are some of the things that can dry up and close our wells in ministry and leadership?

1. Comparison

This is actually a curse. I don't know anyone who doesn't struggle at some degree with this. But you must understand that comparing yourself with others is really a type of curse - it dries up who we are and kills the life of God in us, destroying us spiritually.

Psalm 16:5,6

*"Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.*

*The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance."*

We need to get to the place that David did when he penned this Psalm. Wherever the boundary lines are for you, whatever you are facing, whatever you're involved in - if it's from God - learn to live in the great space of pleasant boundary lines. Then you can say as David did, *"surely I have a delightful inheritance,"* and you can echo what he wrote in verse 9 in this Psalm, *"My heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure."*

This contentment gives us the strength we need and the ability to celebrate what God is doing with others. Stop competing and comparing, it is a curse.

2. Fear

This is probably one of the biggest challenges we all face: fear for the future, fear of failure, fear of ministry, fear of people, whatever it may be. Fear dries up our wells, destroying us spiritually. It sucks out the life of God – I'm amazed at how quickly the life of God is taken from us when we're living in fear.

We've got to deal with fear and understand that it erodes our convictions. Often our fear is shown in how we just do whatever makes pragmatic sense, without regard to what God is really telling us to do. This is a dangerous thing when you're leading God's people. It's fear that causes us to just do whatever works and whatever we know will work, rather than finding out if it's right or Biblical.

3. Conflict

We're involved in conflict. We must understand that there is a battle blazing in leadership and in leading God's people. There is good and evil.

Ephesians 6:10-13

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark

world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

So, yes, we should expect conflict, and we should know where the conflict is coming from and what it really is about and that our battle is not against flesh and blood. Constant conflict in relationships destroys the life of God. It sinks us spiritually. It closes the wells we can draw from.

We are often involved in this kind of conflict because we're involving ourselves in things we shouldn't be involved in. In **2 Timothy 2:23 & 24**, Paul is quite explicit to Timothy on how he should conduct himself in conflict:

2 Timothy 2:23,24

"Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful."

I love how clear that is. This is the reality: foolish arguments lead to quarreling. A lot of leaders are involved in arguments, in things that

might seem relevant but are actually irrelevant, and this sucks out the life of God from us and destroys our spiritual life, and our ability to bring life to whatever the situation is that we're involved in.

This challenge is for us all, including me. We are not to get involved in conflicts that we are not called to fight. This is very real. Eventually we will burn out and lose our way and definitely not finish the race well, if at all!

HOW TO DIG YOUR OWN WELLS

1. Find the Lord

Again, it starts with your relationship with God. We've got to find the Lord in this. We shouldn't be thinking, "God, I hope you're there" but must know he really is there and we can find him. *"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth."* (Psalm 145:18.)

As far as I'm concerned, how much time I give to him is how I let him know how important he is to me. There are no shortcuts here - we've got to go spend time with our Lord.

2. Feast on the scriptures

We shouldn't just be reading the scriptures for our next preach, or because we know we have to read them, but we need to be actually feasting on them – asking questions, digesting the truth, chewing on

it, getting it into us. The scriptures give us revelation and when we are living by this revelation we are strengthened in our spiritual lives. After all, the Word of God is living and active! (Hebrews 4:12.)

3. Focus on prophetic words

1 Timothy 1:18,19a

"Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience."

Paul challenged Timothy to hold onto the truths spoken about him and do battle with them, to war over the prophetic words that were spoken, that he may not lose his way. It's important for us to go back to the things God has spoken specifically over us, over our ministry, our lives, our families, our churches, etc. We should go back to these words of encouragement and feast on them, focusing on what it is our Lord has spoken.

4. Fasting

Fasting is not a punishment! If we understand the need to resource our wells and dig new wells, then we have a lifestyle of fasting, detoxing, and giving attention to what matters. Find what works for you but I'm convinced that when I fast regularly it really helps me. I'm

not referring to calling a fast for the church, but referring to a personal lifestyle of fasting.

5. Fortitude theology

If you have a theology that doesn't allow for hardship, you're going to get very discouraged very quickly, and lose your spirituality very easily. If you look through scripture there is clearly a challenge to trust God to bless you, while understanding that there will be hardship. Paul and Barnabas told the believers that, *"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."* (Acts 14:22.) Peter said to *"not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you."* (1 Peter 4:12.)

These are New Testament letters, written under the New Covenant of grace. These are not Old Testament writings under the Law! If you don't have a theology that allows for hardship you're going to run into trouble. I've seen many guys bomb out of leadership because they can't understand why they are encountering hardship. We need to have a theology of fortitude, so that when challenges come our way we know it's not God that's against us but that challenges are part of life and ministry. We still live in a fallen world.

6. Fight the right battles

We're all in a battle. That's clear from scripture. Again, I'll quote Ephesians:

Ephesians 6:10-13

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

But stop fighting the battles you're not called to fight. If you don't have grace for the battle and you enter the fight, you'll burn out quickly and lose the life of God and your spiritual strength. Sometimes we're fighting battles for our people or those around us when we can't -- we've got to know what we've been called to fight, but we've also got to know *how* we're called to fight and what grace God has given us. Again, don't compare yourself to others here!

7. Forgiveness

I don't know any leader who has never been hurt, and I've never met a believer who hasn't been hurt by leaders eventually, or vice versa. The more we can learn to forgive and live in forgiveness, the more the deep wells of God can flow through us and our spiritual life.

Unforgiveness is one of the biggest destroyers of our spiritual life.

You have to ask: What did God call us to? To a life of unforgiveness or forgiveness? The scriptures are clear. We must lead ourselves into forgiveness – learn to forgive everyone all the time. Then the life of God can continue to flow in and through you.

8. Filled with the Holy Spirit

I recognize in scripture that there is the infilling, refilling, and every other filling we can think of in the Holy Spirit. I'm convinced the more we are making space to be in infilled and refilled in the Spirit (whatever that means for you), the better.

The Holy Spirit brings life. We need to continually be filled by the Holy Spirit, staying in fellowship with Him, fine-tuning our hearing and seeing. He keeps us full with God, showing and revealing and guiding us into all truth, and fanning into flame the gifts given us.

9. Friendships

Relationships outside of the church and with those around you (not just in ministry but real friends) fill our wells and help us spiritually.

Build your friendships!

10. Fun

Laughing and enjoying each other and what we do is something we neglect, and foolishly so. It's amazing to me how many leaders seem to be 'enduring' their call and ministry, as if it's a burden. Yes, it has elements of it that might be a burden, but we need to enjoy what we do. There are seasons when things get tough – we've all had them and I'm sure we'll have them again – but we've got to also have fun. Laugh together and enjoy this journey, it will fill your well and keeps you going.

11. Fit

We need to keep fit and take care of our bodies. In our general culture all over the world today I know there is an obsession about our bodies - people taking endless selfies, always talking about their work-out routines, their diet, and so on. Obviously I don't mean we should be obsessed with our bodies, but I am saying we must be wise with them. When we are keeping fit and in shape and eating healthily it does help us spiritually. It just makes sense. If we are serious about longevity we should take care of our bodies, and lead ourselves in this area.

In the next chapter we will expound on this in greater detail.

Chapter 4:

TAKING CARE OF YOUR PHYSICAL BODY

Taking care of your body is probably the most overlooked ingredient when it comes to self-leadership. We simply don't give enough attention to this.

We are all different in this area and our bodies respond differently to what we eat, and so on. But we must understand this: our physical well-being is a demonstration of our discipline with God. Diet, exercise, sleep and rest are vital for our ability to lead effectively. If we're serious about developing our whole person and staying the course, then we have to take our physical well-being seriously.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Am I getting enough rest?

(I know it's difficult to answer this. It's like asking, "how long is a piece of string?" Only you can answer this question, but it's good to ask it.)

2. How is my current energy level?

3. What am I doing to maintain good health?

4. How am I eating?

5. How am I exercising?

6. Is there anything about my physical health I would like to change?

This isn't about us becoming inward focused and all about ourselves, but it's common sense that our physical ability determines so much of what it is we've been called to. God created the body. We need our body to actually *do* things. We should take care of the body he has given us.

I'm just as guilty as many others when it comes to the idea that we're "just in a busy season" and will attend to these things when everything "quietens down". But let's look at the reality – if it's a season that never ends then *it's not a season, it's a lifestyle*. We've got to come to acknowledge this eventually and make the adjustments.

We need to live in the freedom that God gives us, but we must realize: he needs us, but also doesn't need us. While we are needed let's give our attention to such things and not be lazy.

Longevity

We look after our bodies so we can stay in the race for the long haul. Longevity is what we're looking for. I've met so many leaders who have so much vision and heart, but are frustrated because they never took care of their bodies and now they are physically unable to walk in

all that God has said to them. In hindsight they say they should never have ignored this. This is a challenge for us all, but I believe we've got to take this challenge on – give attention to your physical well-being so you can physically stay strong for the Lord and be able to stay the course, walking in the bigness of what he has called you, and us together, to.

Chapter 5:

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

As we take care of our physical health we must also take care of our mental health. We must lead ourselves in this area.

Ask yourself these questions:

- 1. What am I giving myself to?**
- 2. What am I reading?**
- 3. What am I challenging my mind with?**
- 4. What websites am I accessing?**
- 5. How is my social media life?**
- 6. Am I going to too many meetings?**

What you fill your mind with

Are you resting your mind with what you are reading? Are you reading books, articles, websites etc. that challenge you, that show you a different perspective? Our reading life should be restful and challenging.

Are you wasting your time online, or are you really using the Internet as a valuable tool? Our minds are vital when it comes to us finishing

the race well that God has for us. Here are some questions to always ask yourself:

1. What am learning lately?

2. How am I applying what I'm learning?

3. What books am I reading, and what am I accessing on the Internet? Is what I'm reading drawing me closer to God, or away from God?

Social media

Social media is relatively new for all of us all over the world and we're all learning how to deal with it. I'm convinced that we have a love-hate relationship with social media, and it needs to be like that. We know that social media is vital and strategic and we shouldn't shy away from it - the world is using it and it's not going to disappear, and it *is* a great tool. But we can't live on social media as it has a way of destroying our mental life, and wasting our time. Your smart phone is not your life.

Unnecessary meetings

While we are meeting-oriented in many ways - we've got to get together and *do* things and decide things - there are times when we seem to have too many meetings. I don't just mean church gatherings but also leaders and elders' meetings, and so on. Many times all we're

doing is going from meeting to meeting but never creating *space* for ourselves for the sake of our mental health. Besides, if you're in meetings all the time, when are you spending time with God? Or your family? Or your friends? Or taking care of your body?

We need to give attention to what God has called us to and the importance of our mission, but not just be at everything and do everything.

Chapter 6:

SUBTLE DESTROYERS OF OUR MINISTRIES

There are certain things that are subtle destroyers of our ministry and our leadership. The danger is in their subtlety. Most of us wouldn't even recognize these when they come around, or we don't actually think they will destroy our ministry, but from observation and learning and studying, here are a few things I've noticed will destroy our ministry if we don't recognize them.

1. Personal success

When it always becomes about "me" getting recognition there will be a problem. We battle against sin because sin is all about the self, so let's recognize that sin can be hiding in personal success. Personal success is a subtle destroyer (probably one of the biggest, in fact) and it will always be something we have to check and watch.

2. Personal recognition

We need to understand that godly leadership means caring less about ourselves and caring more about others, seeing them walking in the bigness of all God has for them.

3. Personal profile

Hogging the spotlight, always having to be recognized, always having to be seen... these are problems. It's been said that if you don't check your ego, your ego will check you. Godly leadership means we're concerned about others, about seeing *them* flourish. I've found that the best antidote to needing to be in the spotlight is putting others in the spotlight. Push them into the spotlight and you get out of the spotlight.

4. Personal needs not being met by God

If we're not getting our personal needs met by God then we will need our people, those around us, and our ministries to fulfill these needs. This is a very dangerous place to be and will cause us to eventually bomb out of leadership and not complete the race set before us. We must get our personal needs met by God, through our relationship with God. This is vital and key to finishing the race, so *deal with your stuff*.

5. Personal control

The more I micromanage, the more I'm hindering what God wants to do. I'm not saying we must not lead, but I am saying we must give people the space and freedom to do what God has called them to do.

6. Personal distraction

Every day we are contending for that which we've been called to. We must realize that. I'm amazed how many leaders are distracted and we must get to grips with the fact that this is one of the major things to cause us missing what God has got for us. Stay focused on Jesus, not on the critics, not on your thing - on Jesus – and you'll finish the race. Give people around you permission to get personal with you, to speak in to your life, to challenge you - not because they want to but because you need them to.

7. Personal walk

Letting your personal walk with Christ slide is one of the biggest dangers to falling out of the race. Don't let this slide! *Lay down your life*. There is a personal cost and the the more we're willing to pay the price the more we can walk in in the bigness of what God has called us to.

8. Personal fear

Stare down fear. In all we're called to, stare down fear. As I've previously stated, fear is one of the things that sucks the life of God out of us and stops us from fulfilling the will of God. We've got to pray and read and so on, but at some stage we *actually need to get out there and do it*. When David was going to take out Goliath, he went

into the tent with Saul, and they spoke about the problem, and spoke about a strategy, but eventually David couldn't pray anymore and have anything else to say, but had to get out of that tent, walk down that mountain, and take out Goliath.

We've got some giants that God has called us to stare down and take out. If we don't actually get out and do it, we're not going to walk in the bigness of what God has for us.

THE KEY OF SELF-LEADERSHIP

In closing, I want to reiterate that leadership is key and vital, and we need it more and more in the Church today, but I'm convinced it starts with us leading ourselves. How we are doing in our own lives is something we have to look at again and again, before we are helping others in their lives. We'll need to come back to this again and again, and keep asking the hard questions of ourselves, watching ourselves, our lives, our relationship with God, and keeping in step with his Spirit.

Watch this on video



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