

THE HEALTHY LEADER



- ◆ The **“Growing”** Leader
(Increases your capacity to receive more and more.)
- ◆ The **“Teachable”** Leader
(Allows humility to lessen stress in your life.)
- ◆ The **“Forgiving”** Leader
(Protects you from a toxic disposition.)
- ◆ The **“Deferring”** Leader
(Lives to make “His” name famous and not your own.)

Bill Kirk

THE “DEFERRING” (HEALTHY) LEADER - PART IV

Question: What makes it possible to have success without becoming spoiled?

Question: What enables us to deflect all credit to God and serve other people with joy?

Introduction

- ◆ The question is often asked, “**What do you want to be known for?**” (Good looks, flashy clothes, quick wit, fancy cars, large responsibilities, a position, a title, a trophy, or lots of cash?)

Try this one out – Philippians 4:5
“Let your gentleness **be known to all.**”

- ◆ The word “gentleness” means: “The opposite of contention and self-seeking”.

In other words, Paul says:

- ◆ “Be known for being self-effacing.” (or) ◆ “Be known for not wanting to be known.”

Question: Why is this so important?

Answer: Because God wants to protect us from...

1. The performance trap of **comparison** and competition.
2. The unhealthy control of needing **approval** from others.
3. The driven spirit of **outdoing** those around me.
4. The snare of wanting to be **acknowledged**.
5. The motive of **reward** and recognition.

So God comes along and teaches us:

- ◆ How to be known – for not wanting to be known.
- ◆ How to be okay – with not being known.
- ◆ How to care less who gets the credit – as long as God gets the glory.

John 3:22-31 Answers one basic question:

- ◆ How can John rejoice that his popularity is sinking while Jesus’ popularity is rising?
- ◆ How can John deflect all praise to God, while others are jealous and upset?
- ◆ How can John be joyful and content in ministry while being outshined, outclassed and overlooked?

Grasp the setting of our text:

1. John the Baptist has been reintroduced to explain his relationship to Jesus.
2. John’s teaching on repentance and baptism has spread throughout the Asian churches (Acts 19).
3. Jesus is now involved in a preaching and teaching ministry in the Judean region.

4. Many respond to Jesus' invitations and are being baptized.

And now a problem arises for some:

- ◆ John the Baptists' influence is declining among the populace of Judea, in comparison with the rising influence of Jesus.
- ◆ This causes disturbing comments among John the Baptist's disciples (as jealousy gives birth to argument).

"They came to John and said, the Man you met on the other side of Jordan, the one you said was the Messiah, He is baptizing too, and everybody is going over there instead of coming over here. (V. 26)

In other words, John:

- ◆ "They're leaving us to go to Jesus."
- ◆ "Our numbers are not as big as His numbers."
- ◆ "His popularity is growing more than yours John."
- ◆ Controversy breaks out, initially between the followers of John the Baptist and a particular Jew.
- ◆ It spills over into a potential rivalry between John and Jesus. (V. 26)
- ◆ John is sensitive to the danger of rivalry (and its consequences) so he seeks to defuse the situation, and teaches us how to be a **healthy leader**.

PRICIPLES THAT PROTECT US INWARDLY

I. All We Possess On Earth Is A Gift From God Above. (V. 27)

"John answered and said, a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." (V. 27) (Or) "God in heaven appoints each man's work." (LB)

Question: What is John saying?

Answer: Something that produces healthy leaders.

1. Everything we have has been given to us by God.
2. The ministry is a gift, or loan, from God.
3. We can never boast about how great we are.

In Other Words:

- ◆ John knows that everything he has, has been given from God.
- ◆ John knows that God has given him the strength to fulfill his calling.
- ◆ John knows that God is also giving His Son, Jesus, the success in ministry (and John is content with the popularity of Jesus).

After all, John knows:

- ◆ It's not about him; it's all about Jesus.

- ◆ There is no rivalry when all you care about is God's glory.
- ◆ The greatest liberty is having nothing to prove.

II. **The Gifts We Possess Have Been Given For God's Glory (V. 28)**

"Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, "I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him." (V. 28) Or,

"My work is to prepare the way for that Man so that everyone will go to Him. I exist to prepare the way for Him."

Question: Why is John okay with the rising popularity of Jesus?

Question: How can John be free of jealousy and envy and serve with joy?

- ◆ Because John's goal in life and ministry is to make Jesus famous.
- ◆ John doesn't need to be exalted or remembered because it's all about God.
- ◆ John's burning passion is for God's fame.
- ◆ John flat out wants people to see Jesus, not himself.

III. **Living For God's Glory Brings Us True Joy (V. 29)**

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice, and is filled with joy at his success.

John tells a parable to explain his situation:

- ◆ In the biblical world, the friend of the bridegroom was an extremely important person.
- ◆ He was responsible for many of the wedding details (especially for bringing the bride to the groom).
- ◆ But when he had done this, his task was over.
- ◆ He did not expect to take center stage!

In the same way:

- ◆ John's joy was in uniting Christ to His people
- ◆ John's joy was found (not in wrapping people around himself, but around Jesus, the Bridegroom).

In other words:

- ◆ When John received word from his disciples about Jesus, it filled his cup of joy to the full.

Why?

- ◆ Because John worked his whole life focusing on the Groom getting His Bride.

In fact, beloved:

- ◆ When all you want in life is to see Christ glorified, you welcome every other person's success that points to Jesus, as a gift and a victory!

I love John's spirit:

- ◆ He, like the bridegroom's friend, does not seek pre-eminence, it is not his day!
- ◆ Rather, he rejoices at the union of the Bridegroom with His chosen Bride.

Truth be known:

- ◆ As long as Jesus is worshipped, I can be ignored and forgotten!

IV. Our Joy Is Complete According To Our Deflection (V. 30)

"He must increase, but I must decrease." (Or)

"He must become greater; I must become less and less."

Notice the setting star and the rising sun:

- ◆ John knew he was not the "light".
 - ◆ He knew his duty was to awaken Israel and prepare men for Christ.
 - ◆ But now John is a "setting star". (Why?)
1. Because John does not desire that Israel follow him.
 2. Because John does desire that Israel should follow (and lean on) Jesus.

In other words:

- ◆ Why should crowds continue to surround the forerunner after his task has been accomplished?

Thus, the statement:

"Jesus must increase in ministry, I must decrease and give way to the God Man."

Or:

- ◆ Of what use is the herald after the King has arrived?

V. We Can Only Deflect The Credit And The Glory As We Remain Under Jesus

"He that comes from above **is above all**; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven **is above all.**" (V. 31)

Question: What's the message here to us all?

Answer: That Jesus is of a heavenly origin (Divine) and we are under Him as servants (and true joy and contentment comes from a servant's heart).

What is a servant?

- ◆ The world "servant" (DOULOS) Mark 10:44, and (DIAKONOS) Matthew 23:11 mean:
 1. One who advances others at the expense of themselves.

2. One who exists to serve the interests of his **master**.
3. One who is a slave to Christ without **complaint**.
4. One who cares less about **impressing** other people.
5. One who has died to his **rights** at Calvary.
6. One who is willing not to be "**thanked**" for their service.
7. One who considers it a **joy** to be spent for Jesus.

Conclusion

Question: What does Jesus do to calm John's disciples and protect them from competition and jealousy in the ministry? (I love this)

John 4:1, 3

"When the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, He left Judea and departed into Galilee."

In other words:

- ◆ For the sake of John and his ministry, Jesus leaves the area so He can deflect all praise to God.
- ◆ For the sake of the kingdom, Jesus returns north to Galilee to stamp out any thoughts of rivalry, jealousy, envy, comparison and competition.
- ◆ For the sake of our own spiritual health, God records all of this to produce in us the following life applications and principles:
 1. No one can live for **God's** glory and their own.
 2. Having nothing to prove and no one to impress brings great **freedom**.
 3. Living for an audience of One results in great **joy**.
 4. A servant's heart will protect you from being **offended** and feeling cheated.
 5. True ministry is connecting followers to **Jesus** (not ourselves).
 6. To the extent that **man** is seen – **God** isn't.
 7. The only part of me that can be offended is that part of me which has not **died**.
- ◆ And John's example is meant to crucify our carnal tendencies to compete, compare, and be driven or addicted to the drug of wanting to be seen, admired, approved or recognized.

"Oh God, remind me often that..."

- ◆ Tears are good because leaky heads don't **swell**, (and)
- ◆ Lie low to the ground and you won't have far to **fall**.

What makes it possible to live this way?
(And stay free from boasting and self-promotion)

Two Reasons:

1. **Everything we possess is a gift from God!**

“For what do you have that God has not given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift.” (I Corinthians 4:7)

Which means:

- ◆ “If you have a spiritual gift, where do you think it came from?”
- ◆ “If you possess spiritual strength, where did it originate?”
- ◆ “If God is using you, where does the credit really belong?”
- ◆ In other words, it’s all by Grace!

2. **Everything we accomplish is by God’s grace and enablement!**

Paul said:

“To this end I labor, struggling with all **His energy**, which so powerfully works in me.”
(Colossians 1:29)

- ◆ The word “**labor**” (KOPIAO) means: “To work to the point of weariness and fatigue.”
- ◆ The word “**struggling**” (AGONIZOMAI) MEANS; “To agonize and give maximum effort.”

So when Paul says...

“I labor with God’s energy which so powerfully works in me.” (V. 29) He is saying:

1. The Lord himself infuses strength into our bodies (and)
2. Our resources to do God’s will come from God and not from ourselves!

This is both encouraging and humbling. (How?)

1. God will supply the power and strength that we need to do His work and His will (and)
2. When we accomplish anything of lasting value, it’s because God gave us the energy, power, strength and resources to get it done!

Lord, help us remember:

“By the **grace** of God I am what I am; and His **grace** which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the **grace** of God which was with me.” (I Corinthians 15:10)

And:

“A man can receive **nothing** except it be given him from heaven.” (John 3:27)

Nuf Sed!
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