

The Marks of True Leaders – Part 3

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

Introduction:

1. One of the greatest needs in the church today is spiritual leadership - people who will dare to be leaders for God, on the frontline in the battle against Satan.
2. Today, people are so hesitant to completely commit themselves to anything. This carries over into church life. People want to straddle the fence. They want enough of God and church to soothe their conscience, but not enough commitment to alter their lifestyle.
3. But a local church must have people who are leaders and are willing to commit if that local church is to accomplish anything in God's work.
4. As Paul closes this book, he makes special mention of some leaders in the church at Corinth: Stephanas (vs. 15, 17), Fortunatus (vs. 17), Achaicus (vs. 17).
 - Paul encouraged the Corinthians to submit to these godly leaders that were in their local church. vs. 16
5. Every believer should desire to not only become a follower of Jesus Christ, but also a leader for Jesus Christ. A leader is somebody who is actually influencing people for Christ.
6. Anybody can become a leader for Christ. Notice in verse 15 that Paul says that they were the firstfruits of Achaia (Greece). In other words, these were some of Paul's first converts in the region of Achaia, where Corinth was located. cf. 1:16
 - This means that the household of Stephanas had only been saved less than three or four years. Yet they had quickly grown into respected leaders in the local church. Even more than that, Paul himself obviously had a great deal of respect for them.
 - In God's work, leaders aren't **born** leaders, they are **grown** leaders. Leaders are grown as they are fed God's Word and involved in the work of God.
7. How do we know when somebody is growing into a leader? What makes a good leader in the local church? This text lays it out for us in very clear terms.

First, a leader leads, but loves. vs. 13, 14, 22, 24

1. Verse 13 is a picture of a tough, strong, determined, military officer. Paul says that this is the way a leader for God must be.
 - "*Watch ye*" - vigilant, always on the look-out, keen awareness of his surroundings
 - "*Stand fast in the faith*" - immovable, firm and stationary; they understand sound doctrine and won't be moved away from it. This is the opposite of **Ephesians 4:14**.
 - "*Quit you like men*" - this literally means "to act manly." The leader for God is not a wimp.
 - "*Be strong*" - increasing in vigor, passionate and zealous about the things of God.
2. A leader is not afraid to lead. He is not afraid to confidently say, "This is the way. Follow me and let's get the job done." He understands God's Word and is not going to waffle or back down in any way.

3. This is why **Titus 1:9** says that a leader must "(hold) *fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*"
 - "Hold fast" means that a leader has a solid grasp of God's Word and is able to powerfully communicate it to others and stand for its truth. **Titus 1:10-11**
4. But notice the next verse in **1 Corinthians 16:14**, "*Let all your things be done with charity.*"
5. Isn't this amazing? After a rough, tough, military type of encouragement to stand and be strong, Paul says, "But make sure you do everything in love."
6. What does this mean? It means that we don't equate verse 13 with arrogance, rudeness, with being obnoxious and unkind. Some preachers don't think you are really preaching unless you are brash, mean-spirited, and offending people. Paul basically says, "Stand solidly for the truth, but do it with a spirit of love."
7. A leader for God does not lead by force or intimidation. **2 Timothy 2:24-25**
 - He doesn't drive people from behind with a whip like cattle, yelling and screaming.
 - He is out in front lovingly leading people like a shepherd would his sheep.
8. A leader for God is strong, but also a lover!
 - He loves Jesus Christ. vs. 22 (Anathema - accursed) (Maranatha - our Lord has come) - Jesus Christ is God's final test. What have you done with Christ?
 - He loves people. vs. 24 (What a precious way to end this book which has been a book of rebuke - Paul wanted them to know that he loved them.)
9. Do you desire to be a leader and influence people for Christ? You must grow in your understanding of God's Word so that you can confidently stand on God's Word, but you must also learn to speak God's truth in love. **Ephesians 4:15**

Second, a leader is addicted to ministry. vs. 15

1. We think of addiction in a negative way, but Webster's defines addiction as "the state of being devoted." So an addiction is a devotion to something. That sounds a little more positive, doesn't it?
2. The Bible says in verse 15 that the household of Stephanas was addicted to ministry!
 - What is ministry? Ministry is simply giving to and serving others.
3. Ministry isn't something that happens **to us**, but rather it is something that happens **through us**. Ministry means that we are being a blessing to others. **Philippians 2:4** is a great scriptural definition of ministry. "Look" means "to take aim at."
4. Ministry causes us to take our eyes off of ourselves and focus on others and their needs. **Romans 15:1-3** defines it and **Romans 15:25-27** illustrates it.
5. What acts of ministry did you do this past week? With no ulterior motives, not because you got paid or would get something back, not because you felt guilty or forced to do it. **Illustration:** Teen Camp leaders
6. Paul says that they were addicted to ministry. They **had** to do it. They were consumed with it. It was their passion.
7. Did you know God desires for every believer to be involved in some type of ministry? The love and grace that Jesus Christ has shown towards **us** should be what motivates us to minister to others. **1 Peter 4:10-11**

- You don't minister because you have to, but because you want to, out of the deep gratitude in your heart to Christ. Christ died for us and redeemed us to deliver us from a life of self-centeredness. **Titus 2:14; 2 Corinthians 5:15**
8. What does this mean? It means that it is God's will for every believer to edify and build up others through ministry. Ministry is very natural and normal for the true believer.
 9. When the Spirit of Christ comes to dwell inside of you, He brings with Him the desire to serve and minister to others. **Ephesians 2:10**
 - Many believers are like sponges. They soak up God's grace and they soak up ministry from the church and from others, but they never give anything back.
 - Can you imagine if the entire church was like a funnel, allowing God's grace and mercy to flow through them to others? What if every person in the church was addicted to the ministry of the saints and was just eaten up with it? Wow! I would love to try it!!
 10. You can attend church three times a week, attend a L.I.F.E. Group, read Christian books, listen to sermons on-line, read your Bible, but yet be lifeless and unfruitful. There must be an outlet for you to give back out. That outlet is called your ministry.
 - **Illustration:** What would happen if you kept pumping more and more air into your bike tire? It would eventually pop. This is like a believer without a ministry. Believers have to have an outlet to minister and give back.
 - **Illustration:** What if all you did was breathe in? You would die! You have to exhale and breathe out. When you go to church, L.I.F.E. Groups, Bible Studies, etc., you are breathing in, but if you don't breathe out and give back, you will shrivel up and die.

Third, a leader is a supplier, not a demander. vs. 16-17

1. In the Lord's work there are suppliers and demanders. There are those that go around demanding their rights, demanding that they be seen and heard.
 - **Illustration:** Diotrefes - **3 John 9-11**
2. But a leader for God isn't simply a **consumer**, he desires to be a **contributor**. A leader isn't looking for somebody to serve him, but is looking for someone to serve. Jesus taught this principle concerning spiritual leadership. **Matthew 20:26-28; cf. John 13:4-5**
3. This is one of the reasons that Paul spoke of these men in 1 Corinthians 16 in such glowing terms.
 - Notice verse 16. These people were helping and laboring. They wanted to be part of the solution, not the problem. "What can we do to help? Put us to work Paul."
 - Notice verse 17. They were willing to take up the slack and meet the need. They weren't demanding anything; they were suppliers.
4. A believer will know that he is maturing into a spiritual leader when he finds himself demanding less and supplying more.
 - It never crosses leaders mind, "He didn't shake my hand." They are thinking, "I wonder whose hand I might have missed. I wonder who needs encouragement that I can minister to today."

- A leader doesn't go to church with a consumer mentality. He goes to church with a ministry mindset. The question isn't, "I wonder if the choir will bless me today? I wonder if the preacher will be any good? I wonder if the message will be what I need?"
5. No, a leader is thinking, "Who can I be a blessing to today? Who can I minister to? Who can I help? What visitor can I make feel welcome? Who can I encourage?"
 6. A church is like a team.
 - You have leaders who establish clearly the vision and goals. They are like coaches.
 - You have different members of the team with different abilities that must do their part. They make it happen on the field.
 7. If you are saved, you are a member of God's team. Once you join a local church, you are a member of that team and God desires for you to be a contributing member of that team.
 8. On a team, do the players watch the coaches play? Yet, this is how many churches operate. The pastors are the players and the members are spectators. The pastors should be the coaches preparing the people to minister. The heart and soul of ministry should lie in the heart of the people, not the pastors.
 - For example: if a member has been through a difficult time, they could say:
 - "Pastor Dan was really good to us when we went through that rough time."
 - Or, they could say, "The L.I.F.E. Group and the church as a whole was really good to us when we went through that difficult time."
 - Which one is better? Which one is more Biblical? Of course, the second one.
 9. The effectiveness of Crossroads depends on the number of people who are involved in meaningful ministry. I don't believe God put you in this church simply for consumption, but also for contribution. You are to contribute to the effectiveness of the team.
 10. If you are to be a leader, learn to be a supplier, not a demander.

Fourth, a leader possesses a refreshing spirit. vs. 18

1. Have you ever noticed that some people can give you an instant stress headache? They are demanding, obnoxious, and wired. When you see them coming, you brace yourself; or you turn tail and run the other way.
2. But then there are others that you can't wait to see coming because you always feel like you have breathed in a breath of fresh air when you are around them.
3. This is how these leaders were in our text. They had not only refreshed Paul's spirit (his inner man), but also the Corinthian believers. They were like a cup of cool, refreshing water on a hot Florida summer day.
4. A leader with a refreshing spirit has a positive attitude and spirit.
 - The Bible says about Daniel, *"Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm."* **Daniel 6:3**
 - **Proverbs 17:27** says that "a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit."

5. A leader for God who is influencing people for Christ is not known for things like gossiping, losing their temper, criticizing others, flying off the handle, incessant griping and whining, always quick to give his opinion, etc.
 - These things are not indicative of a refreshing spirit, but a foul spirit.
6. When Paul was in prison there was a man named Onesiphorus who Paul says, "*oft refreshed me.*" Paul was going through some rough times, but this guy always had something positive, comforting and encouraging to say.
7. This is a mark of a true leader. He possesses a refreshing spirit.

In Conclusion:

1. Do you want to be a leader? Do you want to positively influence people for Christ? The household of Stephanas and his comrades are a great example to learn from.
2. What are the marks of leaders that we learned?
 - A leader leads, but loves.
 - A leader is addicted to ministry.
 - A leader is a supplier, not a demander.
 - A leader possesses a refreshing spirit.
3. I would suggest that you write down each of these principles and pray about them. Let God's Holy Spirit instill these things into your life.