

Soli Deo Gloria! – Leadership

A few years ago my youngest son-in-law said that he just wanted to be a servant-leader in his vocation within education administration. I thought to myself, "WOW, now that is a desire to be a true leader." When we think about that role of being servant-leader it can cause us to be conflicted. The "leader" part is fairly easy to understand. A leader is someone who goes before. It is a picture of a father taking a child by the hand and leading them through a briar patch. It is the picture of a boss saying to a worker, "Come on, I'll show you how to do it." It is a picture of a military person on the battle field saying, "Come on men, follow me", and then showing great courage by storming the enemy in the face of great danger. Leadership is talked about much in our society and nation, but it is often misunderstood. We think of the boss at work or president of some company or even president of the United States. When we think of these we usually view these as authority figures.

To most of us leadership and authority go hand in hand. But if we examine these two thoughts there is a conflict in our mind also. We may ask, "How can one who has authority over my actions lead me? They tell me what to do. They don't just lead, they command." See the mental conflict here. When we command we stand behind and push. When we lead we are out front pulling. Get the picture. How can one push and pull at the same time. Now when we throw the idea of "servant" into the mix of words in the mind, we become more conflicted. Servant, Leader, Commander all are roles apart when we deal with them. Now what does a servant do? They take off the coat of authority and the role of the leader and, laying them aside, wash our feet. Their thoughts are only of our wellbeing, not of their authority to command and get the job done, and not of leading to a goal that we have no part in setting. Their servant hood is about meeting our needs. It is about our good that is paramount in their mind. No human being can be all three roles at the same time. Try as we might and have noble thoughts of being all three it is just impossible for us humans. We cannot function in all three at the same time. And our human sin nature moves us to be in one role more than the other if we don't look to a source outside ourselves. Which role do you tend to take? How do these roles fit you? As you examine these, I think you will find that it is very difficult to fit into all three at the same time. We need some source where we can go for help. Now there is a source that we can look to for help. He is the only source. He existed in all three roles on earth and still exists today in a heavenly setting.

Christ Jesus is the one. He not only talked the talk, but He walked the walk. If we aspire to be a servant to others, Jesus is our answer. If we aspire to be a leader in this life, Jesus is the answer. If we aspire to be an authority figure before others Jesus is the answer. Until we know Him and believe in Him as the Savior of mankind and as our Head, we will never be a servant-leader-commander. We can never be a leader until we are a servant. That idea sure goes against what our society teaches. The self esteem movement came into being in the middle to late 1960's. With self esteem we were supposed to conquer the world, and self esteem was to be the answer in every aspect of our life. "We must believe in ourselves," we were told, and still today we are told this. We were to do things in our own strength by having self esteem. We would be to others a good person who gets the job done if we had good self esteem. But believing in this limited being—self—who makes mistakes, gets depressed, has fears, and gets angry and frustrated is a poor and very incomplete way to get the job done. However, when we are submissive to Him as our Creator and King we can be truly a servant-leader-commander.

He knows the way. He's been there. He's done that. He did it and suffered. He did it and died. He did it and rose from the grave. WOW! The bells ought to go off and the sirens ought to pierce our minds with those thoughts. NOW there is a MAN. There is a Servant, Leader, and Authority figure. Where does your source of strength come from to get the job done? When you are placed in a position of leading others do you look inward or outward? After having a great life as a career military person, getting four college degrees, teaching in a community college for 15 years and counseling people for 20 years, self esteem just did not get the job done. It didn't hack it. My personal strength just floundered around, even believing I could do anything I wanted to do. I learned that looking inward to have the strength for getting the job done was a load too heavy. Where do you get the strength to be a servant, leader, and a commander? As I have heard very young children say so many times, "Me do it." is that were we are? If so, my heart goes out to you. "Me do it." is one of the heaviest loads to carry in life, and all other people are in the same boat, so they can't really help us.

May your life be blessed.

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