



ELDERING |

THE GREATEST PRIVILEGE
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Table of Contents:

1 | Eldering: The Greatest Privilege in the World

Page 4

2 | Who Are These People We Call Elders?

Page 6

3 | What do Elders do?

Page 8

4 | Elders as Fathers

Page 13

5 | What Now?

Page 16

6 | The Leader as Mentor

Page 22

7 | Owing Your Leadership Development Process

Page 27

8 | Personal Goal Setting for Personal Growth

Page 31

9 | Tending the Sheep

Page 32

10 | Preaching in the Local Church

Page 36

11 | Understanding Authority in the Local Church

Page 39

12 | What to look for in a Prospective Leader

Page 43

13 | Forming a Team

Page 46

14 | The Role of the Wife of the Elder

Page 48

15 | Administering the Emotional Component of Ministry

Page 49

16 | Ten Steps to Sexual Sin for Christian Leaders and How Not to Take Them

Page 53

17 | Finishing Strong – Avoid the Ambush of Adultery

Page 59

18 | How to Lead a Prayer Meeting by Nigel Day-Lewis

Page 66

19 | Reading a Meeting by Dudley Daniel

Page 68

Eldering: The Greatest Privilege In The World

LIVING IN THE FUNDAMENTALS

very now and again a gift comes along and reminds us of the Fundamentals. We have people like John Piper and Eugene Peterson to thank for reminding us that our God is indeed a happy God. This is one of the fundamentals of the Gospel. There don't seem to be many books on the shelves these days entitled, "Loving a Happy God", or "The Happy God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". In briefing Bruce Marciano, the lead role of the *Jesus* movie, director Regardt Van Den Berg set the tone he wanted for the movie. He said, in effect, that he wanted to present a real Jesus who was happy in Himself. And they certainly got it right.

**Every sunrise and every
sunset is a happy spray of
colour from the happy fingers
of a happy God.**

But haven't you run into Christians who look like they've been baptised in lemon juice? In fact, looking at some of His children one would be excused for thinking God was decidedly

unhappy. A lovely Southafricanism would be to say He is "miffed". But He is far from miffed.

If God was miffed we'd be snuffed – we'd be dead, as in charcoal, carbon residues. Perhaps it is part of the fallout from losing Eden. We're still hiding in the bushes, not quite comfortable with the advances of a loving God.

Piper says we've lost the sense of wide-eyed wonder. We humans are generally a jaded lot, a band of whingers and gripers who usually see the hole and never the doughnut. The human default setting seems to be moan, groan and complain. We protect ourselves in shrouds of cynicism. We actually expect little in life so that we will not be disappointed when we don't get what we want. But Calvary's purpose was to breach the divide, to bring unhappy man into happy relationship with the happy Godhead. *The New Genetic means we get to live in a New Way.* We get to live in the redemptive expanse of all that was once unavailable to us. But now, through Grace, we have come up for air, we have entered in behind the



curtain and we now fill our lungs with the bracing wind of Calvary-bought emancipation. This becomes the *essence of our attractiveness* to the world. Evangelism is not a series of neurotic wide-eyed, Rottweiler-avoiding banging's on neighbourhood doors, clipboard in hand and 3-questioned surveys at the ready. Our demeanour is positive; our language is positive, our marriages happy, and our families are deeply attractive to the world. What a breath of fresh air possibilarians are! Positive people charge our batteries. Visionaries help lift our heads. *We worship God best when we reflect Him most accurately.* Be holy as He is holy. Be Godly as He is Godly. Also, be happy, as He is happy.

Happiness is an issue of *Theology* not *circumstance*.

The God we serve is a happy God and we are to be His happy children. It is as simple as that.

So we do the math. We *agree* God is a happy God, and we worship Him for that!! Next we *make the adjustments* if we are leaders – leaders in the church, in the family, in the marketplace. This means *we think carefully about our leading*.

We ask ourselves questions like: do I delight in leading? Is the tone of my contribution in the Kingdom one of great joy? Am I often complaining about the call of God? Do I revel in the privilege of co-leading with the Godhead?

Do I sigh a lot? Out of the abundance of the mouth the heart really speaks. *The yoke is supposed to be easy, the burden light.* That's what Jesus promised us. I need to remind myself that if the yoke is heavy, it's not Jesus' yoke for me. I need to do God's work, God's way. I am not exempt from difficulty, but I am to be an over-comer in it. Trials are part of the job. Ask Paul. Ask Jesus. Ask any leader who has been doing this for a while. They'll tell you its part of the territory. The difference is our response to the difficulty. None of this makes the business of leading an unhappy grind.

A great part of God's glory is His happiness. God's glory consists much in the fact that He is happy beyond our wildest imagination.

John Piper – The Pleasures of God

When Brazil beat Morocco in 1998, their coach Mario Zagallo said victory was theirs because "*we played happy football,*" because "*we were more joyful.*" Happy football – what a glorious metaphor!

George Mueller once said; "*I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how much shall I serve the Lord; but how much I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man may be nourished.... I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation on it.*" I think he is talking about attitude here.

Benjamin Zander, conductor of Boston Philharmonic orchestra says: "I make myself a relentless architect of the possibilities of human beings."

"The theologian who has no joy in his work is not a theologian at all.

Sulky faces, morose thoughts and boring ways of speaking are intolerable in this science."

- Karl Barth

Sometimes happiness is ALSO an issue of *wineskin*. Some pastors labour unhappily under the limiting burden of unBiblical government structures, and smart under the criticism of a flabby, self-indulgent and adolescent constituency that refuses to grow up and become apostolic as God intended them to be.

Who Are These People We Call Elders?

A DIFFERENT BREED

Elders are a unique breed of people, who have been called by God to a Holy calling, viz. *shepherding His people*. Apart from worship of God, there is no nobler calling, for elders lead God's people, teach God's people and care for God's people.

The NT calls them *shepherds, overseers, watchmen, pastors* and *elders*. All are references to function, never status. They are "offices" in the sense that they are "*trusts given*." Elders are not CEO's, Presidents, Chairmen of the Board, and Banana Republic Presidents for Life. At best, they are fathers in God's household of faith.

Elders are people who have a *proven track record*. There is evidence of the call of God on their lives. They display fruit of a character development lifestyle that is pleasing to God. There is a *sense of government* on their lives: people follow them, people seek their counsel and people endorse their leadership. Their families work with a sense of Godly order. His wife is well husbanded. His children are well adjusted.

They have a *favourable reputation* with those who are "outside". These people *lead themselves* - their emotions, thoughts, careers, relationships and their families. They are *not people of excess*.

Excess,

a going beyond ordinary or proper limits

There is evidence of a *love affair with the Lord* of the universe. They are not detached technicians who dispense theology; they are first and foremost passionate lovers of an Irresistible One. These people *love the Bride of Christ*; they nurture the Bride, protect the Bride, and prepare the Bride - always aware that they are steward, eunuchs, and caretakers of Christ's Woman.

Elders *love the Word* and they love truth. They *love to teach* the people of God, and they live out the reality of that teaching first-hand. Their gift is never enough - and they know this - there needs to be evidence of the *safety net of a Godly character*. (See Timothy and Titus).

Elders are positive people - *possibilitarians* who are not intimidated by the giants. They *absolutely love life* and they live life out loud.

Emile Zola: If you ask me what I am here to do in this world, I will reply, I AM HERE TO LIVE MY LIFE OUT LOUD.

They are *intentional* in everything - they live deliberately, by design and not by default. They live in *wide-eyed wonder of the magnificence of God*, of the glory of salvation and of the joy of living. They revel in the *privilege* of leading rather than in keeping score of the pain of leadership. They embrace inconvenience and live apostolic lives. These are not wingers or whiners. To them, life is an *adventure*, and hardship is merely an *opportunity*. God

give us 100 men like this and we'll
change the world!

"Give Me Scotland Or I Die."

– **John Knox**

Elders are *people-people*. They regard
people as *valuable*, as part of their
inheritance.

Valuable,

having great value
or worth

They never see people as a hassle.
They *believe in people*. Elders believe
in people. They are relentless
cheerleaders, always affirming, always
encouraging and always believing the
best about people. And because they
preach a *transformational Gospel*,
they celebrate progress in their people
– any progress.

What Do

Elders Do?

ELDERS ARE TECHNICIANS OF A PREFERRED FUTURE

The elders are *custodians of a dream* - a preferred future. They are *custodians of truth* - God's truth. They are custodians of *the culture* God wants them to build. Elders *attend to the heritage, audit the present and anticipate the future.*



ELDERS ARE BUILDERS OF A REQUIRED CULTURE

A culture is *that which seems obvious; which seems natural.* This is *an art* ALL

- ✓ **Attend to the heritage:** where have we come from, what is our theological, historical and circumstantial heritage? What is this journey the Lord has taken us, and is taking us on?
- ✓ **Audit the present:** how are we doing with what God has given us, said prophetically to us and invested in us as a people? These are all issue of measurement. Here, we pay attention to the details - the glory is in doing the little things properly.
- ✓ **Anticipate the future:** where is God taking us? Where is our present course of action taking us? Do we want to go there? How is our world changing around us?

elders, deacons and believer priests must pay attention to! There are two ways to develop a culture - anywhere: (a) DO SOMETHING, and (b) DO NOTHING. Both ways will produce a culture - by design or by default.

Dudley Daniel, former team leader of New Covenant Ministries International asserts that we need to build the

following cultures: "A Culture of truth, of caring, of witness, of world evangelising and of church planting, of organic life, of team and team work, of generosity, of signs, wonders and miracles, of effectiveness, of fruitfulness, of freedom, of perseverance, and a culture of holiness."

Character,

moral constitution,
reputation, often,
good repute

There are Five Keys to developing a culture - any culture

1. Pay attention 2. Pay attention 3. Pay attention 4. Pay attention 5. Pay attention.

Five steps to developing a culture

1. **Determination** - decide what you want or you'll get the opposite.
2. **Declaration** - once you have decided what you want or determined your values; now go public - hammer your colours to the

mast.

3. **Repetition** - (Deut 6: 6-8) preach it, publish it, pray it, sing it, and model it.
4. **Evaluation** - How are we doing? The NT values self- measurement against the Word of God.
5. **Alteration** - Make the necessary adjustments to get back on course. Repeat the process 1 - 5.

NOTE: * Allow the culture *time* to develop * Teach the new converts right from the beginning – it is always best to be born again into the NT-value culture.

E.G. THE ELDERSHIP ROLE IN BUILDING A KINGDOM-CULTURE AND A KINGDOM-MINDED GENERATION

UNDERSTAND:

The Kingdom Of God Is The Rule And Reign Of Jesus: (Ps 103:19) *“His Kingdom rules over all.”* Judicially this is a fact of the universe, yet not an apparent reality in the lives of men. Abraham Kuyper - 18th century Dutch theologian and politician - *“the dominating principle of Christian truth is not soteriology, but rather cosmological. The entire cosmos can be understood only in relation to God.”*

The Kingdom Of God Was The Central Point Of Jesus’ Message: Jesus made more than 100 references in the Gospels to the Kingdom, twice to the church. It was not the needs of men, not even salvation per se – it was the announcement of the rule of God over every facet of life in the Cosmos. Kuyper: *“There is not inch over which Jesus does not say, ‘Mine!’”*

The Kingdom Of God Finds Its Expression Through The Church: we are the primary agent as salt and light. The Church is the composite of lives in whom the Kingdom has taken visible form. We are the vehicles through whom the Kingdom of God has come and is coming to our world.

Eldership Role – To Create a Kingdom Culture in the Local House

Insist On The Centrality Of The Message Of The Kingdom: In every thing, the King and His Kingdom *comes first* – before ourselves, our wives, our families, our careers, our safety, our convenience, our “rights”, our ministry. Don’t sell out – buying people off, or

being bought off or making ourselves more popular with the folk who do not want the Kingdom to predominate. Todd Hunter: *The church that I would build would be a community of people who believe the Gospel so much that they actually order their lives around it.* Gibbs: *“Is there sufficient evidence within the confessing community that the King is indeed in residence among His people?”* Do we gather to worship Him as exalted or to create the conditions in which He will speak to us?

Take Our Function As Custodians Of The Kingdom Message Seriously: What is the *overall tone* of our sermons, our prayers (public and private), our prophecies, our evangelistic message, our songs, our writings, our readings (public and private), our conversation, the modelled message of our lives? Call people to a high view of the Kingdom. But it has to live in us if the call is to be authentic.

Expect the Kingdom to take root in and to profoundly influence our community: (Matt 13:31) – mustard seed, yeast – both small initially yet profound in their influence. Eddie Gibbs: *“One common feature of salt, light and yeast is that they are capable of exerting influence far beyond their size.”*

Insist On Transformation On Every Level: celebrate it in others, model it in yourself, pray for it, and desire it wholeheartedly. Transformation is to be the norm. Everyone is to be moving in a forward direction.

Rebuke Behaviour That Is Patently Non-Kingdom: Paul wrote to Timothy: *“COMMAND those who are rich not to be arrogant, not to put their hope in riches...”* (1 Tim 6:17). This is war and the devil will throw all kinds of intimidation at you. (E.G. of such behaviours - all the Self-sins, sins of parochialism, withholding finance and children, not wanting to “go” and be “sent”, of selective participation in the

life of the church). *Your attitude towards the church is a reflection of your attitude to the King and the Kingdom.* If church life is merely an add-on, the Kingdom will not be a priority either. And churches live in what elders and deacons allow.

Train Everyone To The Point That They Are Able To Accurately Restate and Relay The Message Of The Kingdom Of God. To backslide is to reveal an ignorance of the Kingdom rule of God. New converts become disciples as and when they begin to embrace the Kingdom message. (Acts 22:8 & 10) *"Who are You Lord?"* and *"What shall I do, Lord?"*

ELDERS ARE HAPPY THEOLOGIANS

Theology has as its intention *behavioural change* in mind. This makes theology pastoral in intent. Elders guard, guide and govern the flock primarily through teaching, promoting and living out Biblical truth. They are:

Custodians of the truth - stewards, seeing that it is prized, guarded, used carefully, adhered to passionately.

Celebrants of the truth - *lip and life* - hear it in me and see it in me. Modelled medicine. Perceivable passion.

Tireless teachers of the truth - (2 Peter 1:12 -15) - NB words, "I will always remind you" - KJV: "I will not be negligent", with a long-term commitment ("*as long as I live in the tent of this body*"). V13 - I will "refresh your memory" (KJV: "I will put you always in remembrance of these things"). V15 - I will "make every effort" to see that after my departure, you (Peter's legacy) *will always be able to remember these things* (which is the measure of maturity)." KJV: "I will endeavour": speaks of diligence, with speed, and of being prompt."

(2 Peter 3:14) *"Dear friends, this is now my SECOND letter to you. I have*

written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking."

Read (Deut 6:1-9)

Moses philosophy was quite simple: *follow the Lord and you'll succeed.* Commands, laws, decrees: "*keep them, be careful to obey them*".v4 - "*hear O Israel, the Lord your God is One.*" In the OT the word hear always meant, "obey".

It was difficult in the time of Moses as well - because, no matter how fast we humans develop technologically, we remain pretty much the same morally speaking. V7 is the key to leaving a multi-generational legacy.

Moses instruction assumes 3 things:

1. Leaders must be willing to pay a price in teaching theology.

V7 - "*Impress*": to apply with pressure so as to leave a mark, to fix firmly on the mind." KJV - "teach *diligently*" - Heb: "*to prick, to inculcate, to sharpen.*" Whichever way you look at it - the message is clear - it will call for effort and commitment in the heart of the leader.

There is an
**ENORMOUS
CHALLENGE**
in this
generation to bring
through a
**THEOLOGICALLY
deep generation.**

2. Leaders must continuously revisit theological issues. We tend to run on from one great revelation to

another – and we produce a shallow crowd living off the next fast food delivery. Text: v 7 - Impress the issues, talk about them (non stop), v 8 & 9 keep them central in the mentality of the people. Could the fear of “not coming up with new God-products to appease an impatient company” be the reason we gallop onward? Pride? Immature impatience?

3. Leaders must preach for a verdict.

Transformation is *expected*. Spiritual formation is the insisted goal. Not the accumulation of head knowledge per se. (2 Peter 1:5-9) It is possible to HAVE the necessary KNOWLEDGE, and yet for it to be **INEFFECTIVE** and **UNPRODUCTIVE**. (2 Peter 3:1) Our goal as elders is to “*stir them up*” to “*wholesome thinking*.” Wholesome thinking results in wholesome behaviour. Paul: (2 Tim 1:13) “*What you have heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching...*” Eugene Peterson says: “Sound words produce sound behaviour.”

ELDERS ARE TO GUIDE, GUARD AND GOVERN GOD’S PEOPLE.

They help create and sustain an environment in which God is worshipped; people are equipped and released to live apostolic lives.

- The best way to *guide* someone is to model the right path for him or her.
- The best way to *guard* someone is to teach them a love for the Truth of God’s Word so they can discern good and evil. Elders also guard the flock by *praying* for them, *policing the spiritual atmosphere* over the flock through warfare prayer, and through *ejecting wolves* that are set on destroying the sheep, and through enthusiastically holding up a *preferred future* for the folk to follow.

- The best way to *govern* people is by being fathers to them, nurturing them and helping them to become all God intends them to be. See (1 Thessalonians 2).

ELDERS ARE FATHERS

The sheer weight of who they are as people allows people to follow them. People are looking for role models to follow, to pattern their lives on. Paul said, “*Follow me as I follow Christ.*”

In (1 Thess 2:7) Paul writes: “*As apostles of Christ, we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you like a mother **caring** for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to **share** with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become **so dear to us.**” V11 - “*For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his children, **encouraging, comforting and urging** you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory.*”*

Where did we get the
idea
 that leaders and fathers
 were to
dominate,
restrict, limit and
control
 those who follow them?

From the
devil,
 that’s where!!

Let's unpack the words Paul uses here:
"Caring" in the Greek: *"to warm"* - **(Deut 22:6) (Job 39:14)** – the image of a mother bird sitting on her eggs. Its secondary meaning is *"to cherish"*, *"to care for tenderly"*.

Fathers are to lead their families like that. Employers are to employ like that.

v8 "Share with you"– this is not just the delivery of the Gospel, like detached professionals, but Paul says *"we shared ourselves with you."* The language suggests it was a continual practice not a sudden whim. *"You became very dear to us..."* The Greek here is *agapetai* – which means their love for the Thessalonians was a sacrificial love (an agape kind of love).

V9 - *"Surely you remember brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the Gospel of God to you."* **Toil & hardship** - Paul worked hard, with suffering. There is a sense of travail here, and an overcoming of obstacles of some magnitude. "We worked night and day" - KJV: "Labouring" – carries the idea of manual labour.

V 11 - **"We dealt with each of you as a father deals with his children"**- Paul describes what that looks like in v 12 - *"...encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory."* **"Comforting"**: The Greek word here is *"parakletos"*. This is the name of the Holy Spirit. Isn't it interesting that fathers and leaders are identified with words describing *the work and personality of the Holy Spirit* - the Third^d Person of the Trinity?

What does the Holy Spirit do? He leads us and guides into all truth. He reveals the Father to us. He comes alongside us. He assures us of our identity as saved ones and He brings us into ever-increasing liberty.

"Dealt with each of you ": literally in the Greek: *"each one of you personally"* - suggesting individual care, and personal interest. I'm never just a number! In our church, all our men are hunks, all our women are stunning and all our babies are gorgeous!! We've never had an ugly baby born in our congregation!!!

Elders As Fathers

ELDERS PAY ATTENTION TO FATHERING

They reproduce themselves in the sons and daughters. The sons look like their fathers. Not clones or duplicates, but what is in the heart of the father is manifested in the son. If fathers are timid, sons will be timid; if bold, the sons are bold. Fathers set the atmosphere in the house.

They initiate the fathering process. They actively turn from being mere pastors and teachers to *deliberately and actively* becoming fathers. It is a choice, a decision that results in an action. They act like fathers – provisionaries (Weber), encouragers, and mature stable role models.

They replace themselves with the sons and daughters. They build away from themselves, always opening doors for the sons to come through. Fathers multiply their effectiveness through the sons they release. When you leave who will step into your shoes?

They open doors for the sons and daughters. They create opportunities – at the right time and the right speed for those following after them. They are careful of premature promotion and shield the sons from their own immature zeal and desire to be further faster in terms of responsibility and profile.

True fathers lay their lives down for their families.

They love their sons and daughters so they discipline them. Not to disqualify them or exasperate them, but to ensure they learn humility and grace, which will ensure they do not self-

destruct under the weight of future responsibility and increased profile.

The need for fathering

Identity is formed through fathering. It is true in natural fathering as well as spiritual fathering. Heb 12 - see the link between true sons / true fathers and discipline. Today's generation is fatherless (inside and outside the church). Identity is a huge problem.

MODEL FATHER TEACH

People do not know who they are, why they are on the planet and what their destiny is – because they have not been affirmed in their most basic relational need – fathering. Good fathering tells me *who I am and that I am ok in the world*. Jesus needed His Father's public affirmation, how much more do we mere men need it? God affirms people *through* people. Eldership must come to terms with this responsibility. And affirmation is not affirmation unless it is expressed clearly to a happy recipient.

Mentor,
a wise and faithful
adviser or tutor

There are many "orphaned leaders" – fighting for survival in ministry. Their hearts are full of inferiority and this manifests in a competitive spirit. They don't know who they are and so they lead out of that insecurity. Insecure leaders produce insecure followers. They are selfish (the ultimate expression of immaturity). And they don't know how to share, and live outside, the limelight. They use their spiritual position

to dominate and control people. They should be shot at dawn!

Coach,

to give instruction
or advice to

True fathers *want* their sons and daughters *to surpass them*. True fathers are not intimidated and threatened by their sons and daughters. True fathers *revel and delight* in the *progress* of their children. The game of family cricket on the front lawn cannot be dominated by the aging father, determined to live out faded memories of former glory when his body readily obeyed the instructions of his brain. The sons need to win too. Which may mean the father might need to step back a bit and allow that to happen. In the church context this means the lead guy gives space to allow the other leaders to emerge.

How the world needs an
army of leaders - on all
levels - who will redress
the non-caring models of
leadership and
government inflicted on
our society!!

	Instructors	Fathers
Motivation	In	Transformation
Influence	formal	Relational
Context	classroom	Life
Emotion	inaccessible	Accessible
Transference	facts	Heart
Facilitate	open minds	open doors
Material	academic	Practical
Reproduction	skill	Themselves

Instructors need to transition to become fathers: this assumes being close to the followers, loving from close quarters, and being vulnerable.

Instructors, at best, are detached technicians dispensing truth and know-how - fathers share themselves. Fathers *do* instruct, but the over-riding difference is they have a *heart connection* with those learning from them.

Crucial elements of fathering

The son must be someone *who wants to embrace the input* of the father.

- The son must *give the father permission* to speak into his life.
- The son must *follow through* on the suggestions and recommendations made by the father.
- The father must *hold the son lightly* or a cultic dependence and manipulation (“I own you”) may creep in.
- The father must *affirm the son* as much as he can and as much as is wise in the given scenario. (Public affirmation, letters, calls, demonstrated trust).
- The father must understand *timing and pacing*. Fathering is an art – the *press in* and *back off* tension must be discerned.

Opposition to fathering

1. Personal history: To many, fathering is a not a happy word. Elders may not know how to do it, as they may never have experienced it before themselves.

2. Relational dysfunction in the elder: As a result of a low emotional intelligence quotient (EIQ) they may fear getting close to people, feeling awkward about it because they

don't know how to be emotionally accessible.

3. Lack of revelation: They might not see the need for fathering, and anyway instructing is much easier!! It is not messy. Given the hand-down of information scenario in an instructional model, the playing fields are not level.

4. Lack of relational finesse: They can't negotiate the potential minefield of inputting people while ensuring the mentored do not become dependent on the fathering, or they are unable to discern when *benign neglect* is required.

5. Unwillingness to discipline: The fear of man is a snare, and the development of the son is impaired because the father is wimping out.

6. Immaturity in the son: The son does not want to respond to the coaching of the father. Don't waste your (impartational & investment) time on people who do not want to move on.

7. Impatience in the father: He becomes frustrated with the slow progress in the son.

Elders do not
come assembled, nor
do they come with
batteries
included!
A good elder is always
under
construction.

What Now?

LIVING IN THE APPARENT CONTRADICTION

o the apostle or apostolic representative who ordained your new elders has left, the excitement is subsiding and now what? What on earth do you, as the lead elder, do with the new elders that have been appointed in the local house you lead? *Whose job is it to develop them, anyway – God’s, theirs, or yours, or the person who ordained them?* Is there a specific development process that must be initiated for them? And if so, which one? Is there more than one? Is it possible to lead such a development process while committing to the NT expectation of friendship before function? Perfection is not assumed, infallibility not expected.

Usually the new elders have no previous eldering experience, and even if they do, their past may be unhelpful in the current realities of the new day in which God has called them to elder. This is the apparent contradiction and the tension in which we must live and lead: *God develops leaders and so do people.* God is the Maker. He is the One who brings people through into their destiny. Downplay this truth and you end up with a Frankenstein model. You could also develop some very unhelpful messianic delusions. The modern Pentecostal and Charismatic movement could do with a greater dollop of theology underscoring the sovereignty of God. God is at work. He has never been an indolent God. He is forever fiddling in the details of our lives, working and reworking His



purposes into us, and working our selfish purposes out of us.

People are also leader-makers. The people being developed play a major role themselves – by choosing to cooperate with God and with their call. The followers, by allowing themselves to be led, contribute to the making of the leader. Circumstances fashion them as well – so do disappointments, failures, rejection, confusions and doubts. You and I are the product of a partnership comprising the Godhead, ourselves, our people and our circumstances.

Have you ever stopped to think that God may be more interested in doing something **BIG in you rather than something **BIG** through you?**

THE MAKING OF A PERSON

The O.T. passages in Haggai 2:20-23 and Isaiah 49:1-7 are key verses to study in this regard. An interesting exercise to do is to write down what is that one big thing you want to do for God? Most people will write big

elaborate personal manifestos at this point. This is not entirely a bad thing. It is God’s intention to let you loose on the world – His vision for your life is technicolour, quadraphonic, with a Big Movie ending that ushers you to the table at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Some time ago a lady wept in my office and said she did not have a destiny, a vision and purpose that others had – and that somehow she had been by-passed. She felt *God did not have a vision for her life.* I went home and said to Jan, that “an

impact-conscious, destiny focussed mentality has *inherent dangers*".

It dawned on me that perhaps **God's greatest intention for her / my life – and yours – is that we be conformed into the image of His Son.**

And being and becoming a leader is a *wonderful opportunity* to be conformed into His image.

Here's why:

- Leadership is a *frontline function* requiring a level of seriousness that creates a climate conducive for personal change to occur.
- Leadership is the *bottom of the rugby scrum reality* – the level of abuse is wonderfully transforming.

You need to reject the following illusions:

- **You come "batteries included"** – some assembly is required- you and I are *a work in progress* – you are not Michael the Archangel just looking for a place to unload your gift on the world.
- **God cannot use you until you are totally assembled** – He specialises in using clay-footed people who are in process, sons and daughters He is working on while they are working out His purposes in the Kingdom.

5 KEYS FROM HAGGAI :

God does the making – in the model we subscribe to, we talk about "*bringing leaders through*" – and if we say it carelessly we begin to assume that we are the ones who "MAKE" leaders. **But it is God who does it** – not us – we may participate sometimes, but He is the one who essentially does the making. Transforming people is too much of a priority on God's heart for

Him to leave it solely to our human (and fallen) discretion.

The question is primarily not what do I do but rather what has the Holy Spirit being doing in me all these years of my non-cooperation and what is He doing still?

(You must be prevented) from taking on the Christian life as your project. God has already taken you on – you are His project.

Eugene Peterson – The Wisdom of You and Me – p32)

1. **God insists on it** – Notice the language is **very direct** – "*I will shake the Heavens, I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms, I will overthrow chariots, I will take you, I will make you ...*"
2. **God makes us in the context of intimacy** – we are not a project, not a programme – the big question is this: *are the people you lead a programme, your personal project?* This may be understandable with people on the entry curve of leadership – an assumption born out of ignorance – but this must change with time. God's making of us is a **fashioning born in the gracious embrace of a Father** – In v2c you will notice the Fatherly tenderness of God – "*For I have chosen you.*" He chose you – He knitted you together in your mother's womb and placed in the very fabric of your personality *everything you would need to fulfil His purpose for your life.*

And in love He drew you from your mother's womb, and ever since then, has been fussing over the details of your life with parental fussiness. **Notice the text** – can you hear the strong conviction in the Father's voice illustrated by the Holy Spirit's use of the word **DECLARES** the Lord? This declaration follows "For I have chosen you." There is no doubt in God's mind about you. HE HAS CHOSEN YOU. Notice too – He knows Zerrubabel **by name** – and that he is the son of Sheal-tiel.

There is no *one-size-fits-all* approach to God's dealings in our lives – **which is why comparison with where others are at is so** utterly stupid. (Isa 64:8) "Yet, O Lord, You are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter, we are all the work of Your hand."

3. **God makes us for noble purpose** – "like My signet ring" – this is the normal metaphor for authority, apostolic authority. You Zerrubabel – put your name in there – are a *sent one* – backed by all the authority and power of the Sender. God says you are "MY signet ring" – not the group to which you affiliate, not the possession of the guy who leads your team, not the congregation's – You are His signet ring. MINE!! God is being deeply personal, deeply intimate. *This is a holy thing.* "I am my Beloved's and He is mine."
4. **God does not ask Zerrubabel's opinion:** He merely assumes that he will be co-operative! And I am so glad He has not left it up to us. Aren't you glad God has not left it up to us? *Some of the biggest opposition we face is internal. Our emotions, our feelings, being dominated by our circumstances.* Like Gideon we hide in the winepresses of our inferiority and

think, 'God wouldn't possibly want to make me into anything.'

He has qualified you Colossians says. In His infinite mercy, He has reached down from on high and has included you in His love. This sounds much like Jesus in (Matt 4:19) – "Come, follow Me, I will make you fishers of men." In the Greek it reads, "I will make you to become fishers of men." Don't negotiate with Him, just follow and He will make you what you need to be.

Sometimes we don't feel particularly worthy – and let me help you here with all the sensitivity I can muster – get over it!! – You're not worthy!! But He is!!

HOW DOES HE MAKE US?

Through:

1. **AFFIRMATION:** At Jesus' baptism the Father said; 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased.' (Matt 3:17) A vicious conspiracy is at work against you – what Martin Luther called the great triumvirate – the *flesh*, the *world* and the *devil* – **and they conspire night and day to drown out the Father's voice of affirmation.** And to use Max Lucado's words, many *never hear the Applause of Heaven.* What do you hear? Unless you learn to hear His approval you will always be *orphaned in spirit* – **and there is no more dangerous leader than one with an orphaned spirit.** He will always feel the need to self-promote, and *to make his name great* – when God clearly said to

Abram and thus speaks to us today that, "*I will make your name great.*"

2. **ADVERSITY:** Israel is a great example of God transforming a people. His great and patient task was *to turn slaves into warriors* – He had to teach them war and so the enemy was never immediately expelled and it was "*little by little*" that they broke through. I believe in deliverance and know God is also the God of the suddenly. I also know that this generation has an aversion to pain. A health and racquet theology has left us with little stomach for suffering.

In the 70's Pink Floyd sang: "I am comfortably numb." A friend once preached: "there is a quick cure for everything. If it is sore – numb it, if it hurts – dope it." Charles Spurgeon said, "*God puts His children into the furnace of affliction, He will be with them in it.*" Adversity comes to us in varied forms – God brings you difficult people so you can grow, life comes at you in both barrels, people misinterpret and misunderstand you, some question your motives. Godly living brings its own challenges as promised in Paul's letter to Timothy.

3. **ADJUSTMENT:** Every time you approach the Word of God you are inviting Divine Adjustment. Adjustment is not an easy thing. For we are expected to leave safe, familiar places – even if those places are places of captivity. A good example of this is the movie called *Shawshank Redemption*. A newly released prisoner commits suicide because he could not handle freedom. It may be a prison but it was his prison." *Have you ever wondered why Leadership Training Times can leave you quite fatigued – it is war.* Chris Wienand said that God does not work within time frames but opens new areas of opportunity for us based upon

our response to His call for adjustments. The question is not *how long Lord*, but *what must I change Lord?*

Isaiah speaks about levelling the mountains and filling the valleys and making the crooked paths smooth – this has to do with making adjustments in our lives so that a Highway of Holiness can be built. One of the big ones He needs to clear up in us is the area of MOTIVE – why do you want to be a leader? Why are you a leader? It is OK to start with *fuzzy motives* – at least you're on the field but be ready – sooner or later God will want to test you on it.

The Prodigal son in (Luke 15) began with the words, "Give me ..." but ended the story with "Make me ..." Eugene Peterson says the advantage in staying a pastorate for a lengthy period is you are forced to grow. "*You have to grow. You can preach and worship and disguise who you are for a few years, but then comes the time when you have to make a decision. Am I going to move to a new place and disguise myself again until they discover who I am, or am I going to become something more? If you decide to stay, you will be forced to become a deeper and more extensive person.*"

4. **ABANDONMENT:** Sooner or later we must learn to walk on our own. Sooner or later we become familiar with something I call "*benign neglect*". Children go through this phase – they have to learn that they are to share their toys with their siblings, that they are not the Centre of the universe. There are seasons when leading just seems extra hard. Have you felt that? There are moments when deciding on a teaching, writing a sermon, leading a home cell calls for a digging deeply into the wells of grace. *John Piper* says there are

seasons when it seems that *God hides our preaching success behind His back* so that His glory is established in the hearts of men and not our own glory!

The question is: Can you only lead when you are being affirmed and supervised? There is no future for a leadership style that relies solely on supervision.

5. **ACCELERATION:** Ananias is sent by God to open Saul's blinded eyes and to tell him of the things he must suffer for the Name of Jesus. Saul is on a fast track to becoming Paul – there is a new moment he must step into. Acceleration into the call and purposes of God is a brilliant *leader-making context*. The sheer scope of what God has led you into demands a response hitherto not lived in. Do you think Paul came ready to roll, apostle on wheels? No, he was thrust into the purposes of God and had to learn on the job. Acceleration might be the very thing you need. I know there are dangers of premature promotion – but if it is God, it is never premature even if it looks surprising to the rest of us.

3 RESPONSES:

1. **Embrace His making process in your life.** Don't be offended by the process God has you going through.
2. **Enjoy the security of knowing the hand that shapes you is the Father's hand.** Don't let the devil or your emotions lie to you.
3. **Expect His transforming power to be at work in you.** Paul says it works mightily in us.

The Beatles were right, "the road is long ...". The atheist Frederick Nietzsche accurately if sarcastically called Christianity the long walk of obedience in the same direction. Leadership is a *lifetime of allowing*

*Him to work His stuff **into** you and your stuff **out** of you.*

WHY SHOULD PEOPLE HAVE TO LEARN THE HARD WAY?

Can there be anything more dismal than being sentenced to learn the hard way? The majority of the usually presenting dysfunctions in the local house are easily avoidable. Eldering ought to be a pleasure not a painful sacrifice. There ought to be wonderfully enriching, life-giving relationships within the eldership team. Silly mistakes, oversights, inadequate decision-making, internal insecurities are all highly avoidable. The little foxes can be identified, anticipated and neutralised before any real harm is done. Why waste valuable time and energy wrangling over internal issues when our real war is against principalities and powers? Likewise, larger issues can be nipped in the bud when leaders are accountable, real and vulnerable. Every leader should never write his own promo splurb. Every leader should always hand the red pen of accountable intimacy to another who will love them enough to tell them the truth and ring the typo's of inconsistencies, blind-spots and just plain stupidity. Each elder is a unique specimen - a complex, fascinating concoction of personality, character formation, capacity levels, personal histories, experience, expertise, specific world-views, internal insecurities, strengths and weaknesses. Some are captains of tens, others fifties, others hundreds and thousands. Some are one, others two, and others five-talent people. If he is married his wife brings her unique contributions as well. We are talking about different passions, different motivations, different learning methods, and different responses. It is the privilege of the lead visionary elder to set the direction with his team of elders. But there is more to his function than meets the eye.

He is not their employer, owner or even manager. He must be their friend and the one who opens the door to their future. The legacy he leaves comprises the men and women he brought through – the eldership and deaconate teams. He must embrace the privilege of doing all he can do to help them become all God destined them to be.

If we **rush** on to the job of investing in people - without a **healthy** sense of **ourselves** - we will all **pay** a terrible price in the end.

insecurities never made space for others to come through. They have done incalculable damage. *God spare us from little leaders.* Napoleon said there are no bad soldiers, just bad generals. Stupid shepherds have caused much damage because they were never schooled and challenged out of their littleness. Instead they flaunt their so-called authority, bruising people, giving vent to their little egos and generally resembling banana republic presidents-for-life. All that is missing is the motorcade and the palace. How this has grieved the heart of God and thwarted the mission and mandate of the church.



This kind of legacy making calls for a lead elder who is big on the inside. Heaven knows we have had enough little men and women – little tin gods - who have wrecked havoc in the church because their ego's and

The Leader As Mentor

MENTORED MENTORS

The starting place is the mentor-leader himself. And it is a very good place to start. It seemed as if Jesus was determined to help the Pharisees see themselves as they really were. But Pharisees generally tend to miss the point. *The real place to begin is with the lead elder himself.* What does the mentor-leader look like? Is he some iconoclastic model of perfection – one who always has it together? Surely he should at least be perfect? Never a hair out of place, so anointed he glows in the dark. A one-man spiritual Rambo who takes on everything and who always wins every single battle he faces.

Fortunately they don't exist – except in the glamorised Hollywood-induced corridors of fantasy leadership. The rest who live in the real world are grateful for Bible examples, like David, who were great leaders yet with great flaws.

In no way does this lower the bar and excuse sloppy, unGodly living and leading. But it does help us live in the tension that the vessels are essentially earthen, and as such susceptible to the human frailties that beset all men. And yet these clay-footed vessels contain the Treasure – the very Holy Spirit – whose great indwelling power energises us, to live holy lives despite our humanity. Paul writes in Titus: *"It is the grace of God that teaches us to say "no" to unGodliness."* It is His power

– that which raised Jesus from the dead – that is able to help us live in victory over sin.

Some never rise to any level of impact because they are continuously undermined by their own sense of inadequacy. Beset with the memories of their own failures and with the knowledge of their own frailties and insecurities they find it impossible to lead anyone anywhere. They try to play the part, to look the part – but whatever they do still carries with it the disturbing, betraying stench of inauthenticity.



These are the marks of authenticity: *we know God and we know ourselves.* We have looked into the Perfect Law of Freedom and have seen our blemishes, as we have metaphorically bent over the Bronzed Laver. We have seen Him who is perfect and we have seen the huge, hopeless chasm between His glorious perfection and us. And just when we were about to give it all up – as some cruel, unattainable goal – we caught sight of the

priceless Blood of the Lamb which did what Isaiah's coal from the altar did. The Blood cleansed our disqualification and gave us access into the heart of the Father. With grateful joy we crossed over and entered into that to which we once had no access.

An authentic leader knows God and knows himself. He deals in reality. He has no time for playing to the crowd. The basic currency by which he conducts the business of his life is truth – what you see is what you get. What a joy that is! He doesn't spend all his waking hours papering over the cracks of his inconsistencies. He doesn't hide his blemishes behind a CEO façade of inapproachability, or take refuge behind the pathetic, too-often heard

mantra, “do not touch God’s anointed”.

Instead he admits his blemishes – *the Bible calls it repentance* – and then he allows the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to do a deep work – *which the Bible calls sanctification*. Deep down. He reveals his humanity – confessing his sins to others when necessary. Disclosing his concerns and insecurities. This is a leader we can follow. Not carried away by his successes and not hijacked by his failures. Eugene Peterson warns us clearly, “*In our eagerness to be sympathetic to others and meet their needs, to equip them with a spirituality adequate to their discipleship, we must not fail to take with full seriousness our straits, lest when we have saved others we ourselves should be castaways.*” (Under the Unpredictable Plant, p4).

This generation has spawned a plethora of new words, like *spin-doctor*. He is the politician’s make-up artist. The one who twists reality in an attempt to make the unpalatable believable. He strives to make the inauthentic appear authentic. The problem with spin-doctoring is that it can make you dizzy. And you can spin out of control! Simon Tugwell writes, “...” *and so, like runaway slaves we either flee our own reality or manufacture a false self which is mostly admirable, mildly prepossessing, and superficially happy. We hide what we know or feel ourselves to be (which we assume to be unacceptable and unlovable) behind some kind of appearance which we hope will be more pleasing. We hide behind pretty faces, which we put on for the benefit of our public. And in time, we may even come to forget that we are hiding, and think that our assumed face is what we really look like.*” It’s just far too much effort to be anything other than yourself.

Secure

leaders produce secure followers. And they preach a message that is **securing.**

One of the results of being a fatherless generation is the proliferation of orphaned spirited people. These are men and women who have not had their identity fashioned by a father’s love. They can often be found scrapping like urchins for bits of affirmation and profile. Their hearts are full of inferiority and this manifests in a competitive spirit. They don’t know who they are. They are selfish and do not know how to live outside the limelight. I always say, *never trust a leader who never shows you his legs and who never laughs at himself. Never trust a leader who is whisked through a side-door during the fifth song just before he gets up to preach.*

I want to be influenced and fashioned by leaders who know their God and who know themselves. These are leaders who take God seriously and themselves lightly. Angels, I’m told, can fly because they take themselves lightly. The secure leader is learning to laugh at himself. He is learning that he does not always need to be right. He does not always need to be consulted and considered. (In fact, your congregation will not grow until you grow out of the adolescent insistence of being in on everything.) He has handed the red pen of accountable intimacy to someone else, inviting their loving editing of his life.

The secure leader realises that he has “sheep needs” himself. Henri Nouwen puts it well, “... *Jesus wants Peter to feed His sheep and care for them, not*

as “professionals” who know their client’s problems and take care of them, but as vulnerable brothers and sisters, who know and are known, who care and are being cared for, who forgive and are being forgiven, who love and are being loved. I am speaking of a leadership in which power is constantly abandoned in favour of love.”

So the best place to start is with me – especially if I am the mentor-leader. There is no Authenticity 101 course I can take. No-one can confer that on me. Apostolic hands cannot impart it to me. A book won’t be able to do it. Even hanging around great men and women of God won’t necessarily make the required change in you. Biblical transformation can only occur in me when I invite the Spirit’s invading influence, when I recognise my need for God to re-parent me and when I embrace the fact that leaders are essentially a “work in progress”.

Power in the hand of a secure leader is a blessing to the world. Power in the hand of an orphan-spirited person is too ghastly to contemplate. Can you consciously abandon power in favour of love?

Every attitude, paradigm and behaviour I possess is a learned response. I picked it up – mostly subconsciously - on the journey of life, some through DNA, some through my environment and my life’s-context. Francis Schaeffer writes, “*People have presuppositions, and they will live more consistently on the basis of these presuppositions than even they themselves may realise.*”

By presuppositions we mean the basic way an individual looks at life, his basic

worldview, the grid through which he sees the world. Presuppositions rest upon that which a person considers to be the truth of what exists. People’s presuppositions lay a grid for all they bring forth into the external world. Their presuppositions also provide the basis for their values and therefore the basis for their decisions.”(p 19 How Shall We Then Live Crossway Books). The gobsmackingly-exciting thing is that every behaviour I manifest and every attitude I have can be unlearned.

Every presupposition I have needs to go through the redeeming grid of Scripture. John Stott asserts that we need to allow Scripture to do its offensive (double-edged sword) and offending (subversive) work within us, “...*the first step towards the recovery of our Christian heritage will be the humble recognition that our culture blinds, deafens and dopes us. We neither see what we ought to see in Scripture, nor hear God’s Word as we should, nor feel the anger of God against evil. We need to allow God’s Word to confront us, disturbing our security, undermining our complacency, penetrating our protective patterns of thoughts and behaviour and overthrowing our resistance.*” We do not master Scripture, it masters us. Scripture invades and overwhelms us. We voluntarily concede defeat and joyfully embrace His plundering of our fortress of self, accepting His government in our lives.

Go through the filing cabinet of your attitudes and worldview, deleting files that war against the formation of the Kingdom of God within you. Take yourself by the collar and demand change. Be ruthless with excuses and rationalisations. Call the sin by its name. Disappointment is merely polite anger. What we may like to rationalise as being “organic,” may in fact be laziness. You may not really be “prophetic”, just rude.

COPING WITH CRITICISM

One could merrily launch into a lengthy yet simplistic dissertation on how to deal with criticism. That would be a complete disservice unless it was prefaced with a few other related and contributory observations.

Live in the real world: 1. Too many elders live from the back foot, too often defensive and reactive instead of responsive,

2. the pastoral ministry is *supposed* to be akin to playing *happy football* – the norm *is not supposed* to be a perpetual atomic fallout condition. This is a yoke that should be easy and a burden that should be light,

3. people are a work in process and will be inappropriate, they will say the strangest things and with a regularity that is clockwork in its frequency,

4. life is unfair – get over it! They misunderstood Jesus; they'll do the same to you!

You are not Michael the Archangel:

1. you are *also* a work in progress (your spouse will confirm that for you!),

2. you are not infallible, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent – you could be wrong!! Now there's a thought!

3. you may need the church more than they need you, and the difficult circumstances may be part of your tuition – enjoy the class.

The sheep are not all stupid and

certainly not all the time: sometimes you'll find there are stupid shepherds who make stupid decisions and say stupid things, with a horrific sense of timing and even misguided zeal.

Foot-in-mouth disease will always elicit a response.

The triangle on its side means leadership is a vulnerable exercise: so you want to be Biblical in your

The stones critics hurl with harsh intent, a man may use to build his monument.

Arthur Gutterman

leadership model? Well, then – being man-handled by the crowd now and again is part of the package. Traditional hierarchical models protected leaders from criticism. We do not have that “luxury”. **Not everything is personal:** it is not *always all about you* what you are doing. You could be the sweetest, most Godly leader in town and people could still criticize you. In fact, they could criticize you

for being sweet and Godly!! Learn to discern the real issues and to separate them when necessary. We must fight the right wars at the right time.

Let criticism be your friend: living in a Utopian situation might not be an indication of anything at all. God has much to teach us and we have much to learn. What can we learn from the criticism? Is there any usable truth hidden in all the verbiage? Could the criticism be God-sent? Is this criticism the catalyst that could propel us to our new level of inheritance?

The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism.

Lutheran Education

Things that minimise criticism:

1. **Live your own life carefully before**

God – He is the One we live to please, and thus we live carefully, wisely and intelligently under His benign Gaze. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom is the fruit of a life of being connected with God.

2. **Live your life according to regular spiritual disciplines** – prayer, meditation and study of the Text, quiet reflection and a culture of thoughtfulness. We run into all kinds of problems unless we spend *regular time*

disconnecting from the self-obsessed, self-protective culture in which we live. Self-pity is the opposite of a life of intimacy with the Father. An inappropriate response to criticism will result in self-pity and self-pity is a veritable cancer.

3. Stop long enough to measure – fools never measure. They never stop long enough, in their lemming-like charge for the cliff, to evaluate and measure. Elders should measure themselves (primarily), their own spiritual health, the frequency and depth of their spiritual disciplines, their own EIQ (emotional intelligence quotient), their heart for people, their manners and etiquette and relational finesse. They should also read their stress levels, fitness condition, sleep patterns and relaxation processes. Why? Because it is always the *little foxes* that spoil the vineyard. Pay attention, pay attention, pay attention.

4. Learn to let God secure you in your identity – Jesus was well disposed towards criticism because He always operated from a position of security.

- Sometimes we have to make unpopular decisions.
- Sometimes we have to act decisively and forcefully.

We need a generation of leaders who are secure:

- ✓ secure in God,
- ✓ secure in their call,
- ✓ secure in who they are,
- ✓ secure in their function as elders,
- ✓ secure in their place on the team of elders (especially if their gifts are not necessarily upfront gifts), or on translocal teams.

We have seen enough carnage created by little tin gods and insecure neurotics who scrapped like urchins in the gutters of power because they were not cohesive in the centres of who they were.

5. Build a truly NT church culture – much of what Grandma told you was right all along! A stitch in time *does* save nine, and the *devil does find work for idle hands*. The Bible says, “Without a vision the people perish.” The Hebrew word for perish (*para*) has many nuances of meaning, one being “to throw off restraint.”

Democracy rules, usurpers illegitimately wield power and the biggest issue we get reduced to is, whether we should buy China or disposable teacups. Leaders are to channel and open doors for the energy God gave people to do good works (Eph 2:10). A corporate (apostolic) vision provides *disciplined tracks* on which the church moves forward. A visionless culture will result in a self-inflicted wound of criticism.

6. Actually have team in your team – the Bible has so much to say about team. Not “*have a team*” – but actually “*be in a team*”. Much criticism could be avoided if men and women were accountable, really accountable, and seen to be so! Perceptions are reality to people. A team keeps things sane. A team prevents you making silly decisions. A team prevents you living out your strange delusions. A team removes the blind spots for you because there is so much diversity in anointings, giftings, experience and personality. A team also helps keep things in perspective. Proverbs is full of such advice.

Owning Your Leadership

Development Process



Paul gives a delightful description of Titus in (2 Cor 8:16). He says *"he is coming of his own initiative and with much enthusiasm."* Don't you just love that!! I want a 1000 leaders like Titus!! Lets unpack the title of this chapter: Owning your Leadership Development Process.

1. **OWNING:** this is something *you* have to *personally embrace* as your own delightful and joyful responsibility. Titus is coming on his *"own initiative."* No one else can do it for you – others can *add value* to your process, they can advise, they can mentor, they can correct and encourage but at the end of the day it's *really up to you*. The dignity of participation is the issue here. You get to do something about it. The tone here is to be one of sheer delight, a joyful submission to the adventurous process God has you on. Titus is coming *"with much enthusiasm."*
2. **LEADERSHIP:** this includes the following issues: *personal* (personal interiors) and *public* (personal

exteriors), *character* (the hidden) and *charismata* (the expressed), *self-leadership* (discipleship) and *servant leadership* (ministry).

Assumption: leadership is *an art to be learnt*, it is a learnt response. *Leadership is influence*. We can learn to lead in a better way, removing *environmental resistance* so that the Kingdom can grow through me.

3. **DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:** no one comes *"ready packaged"*, all of us are on a journey, a process of development. It is God's intention to grow us and to develop us to be useful in the Kingdom. It is a *process we can speed up or slow down*. The choice is in our hands. Our process is a *joint venture between God and us and the community of which we are a part*. "Follow Me and I will make you to become fishers of men." "I will take you and I will make you into My signet ring."

VALUE AND VELOCITY ISSUES

Discipleship is about the removal of environmental resistance in our lives. It is a velocity issue. Discipleship is not a *value issue*. God does not love us more if we are better disciples. Removing environmental resistance in our lives does not make God love us more. Yes, we will please Him more, but not on a basis of intrinsic value. The issue is *velocity*. How much of our inheritance can we live in? How clear and unambiguous is the sound that emanates from our lives? With what can God trust us? Discipleship is about the *removal* of environmental resistance in our lives. The high places of personal excess must be brought low, and the low places of personal inferiority must be raised up so that a highway of holiness can be built for people to access God through the example of my life. It is not about making ourselves more acceptable to God.

THE GOAL OF OUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. God is glorified,
2. The Kingdom is advanced,
3. People are saved and disciplined to be effective and fruitful,
4. We walk in the good works God has pre-ordained for us to walk in,
5. The saints are equipped and the church comes to a place of maturity,
6. Joy and fulfilment is released into our lives,
7. Leaders are multiplied through us,
8. We give leadership into the community *from* the church,
9. We plant more NT churches.

MEASUREMENT: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEDIOCRITY AND EXCELLENCE

(Romans 12:3) *"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you; Do not think of yourself more highly that you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."*

Plato said the unexamined life is not worth living. Measurement is the key to success in life. But not all of us are keen to do the measuring of ourselves.

Reasons for the absence of measurement:

- *Ignorance*: (someone else should do it for me)
- *Fear*: of what I will find (don't want to face the monsters lurking there), of failure (what if I try and fail?)
- *Laziness* (its too much like hard work)
- *Pride* (I can't possibly improve on perfection)

Result of the absence of measurement

- *Stagnation*: maintenance mode, ultimately we lose what we already have
- *Sterility*: life is not reproduced, what life there was is choked out by ignored environmental resistance
- *Smugness*: Pharisaic arrogance, "we have it you don't"

whitewashed sepulchres, self-deceived, status quo motivated

BEING * DOING * KNOWING: there is a vital interplay between these three concepts. Traditionally we focus on the second and last and spend insufficient time on the first. Wynand de Kock has helped me in this area. Here are his ideas, with a few adaptations of my own.

BEING	KNOWING	DOING
Character	Theology	Ministry
Self concept	People	Leading
Inner weather	Task	Following

BEING:

Character issues – these are *the hiddens*. They may not be readily visible but ultimately they will surface. What I am really like when no one is looking. The source, the fount of my external behaviours. These include personality issues, my responses to life, to people, to God, and to myself.

Self concept – we all have a *self concept*: how I see myself, my own understanding of who I am. My self-definitions (self-generated, others-generated). But what are God's definitions of me?

Inner weather – my ability *to make my own weather*, to deal with setbacks and to stay on course, fight my own fight of faith, with perseverance, increasing stamina, and an enlarging capacity. *"David encouraged himself in the Lord"*.

KNOWING:

Theology: what I know of God, mostly from the Scriptures, for the process of living my life, and for the business of being a leader. What I know of the character, nature, personality of God, His ways and His will, His plans and His purposes (for me, for those I lead, for the world), Biblical doctrine.

People: my people skills, how people think, what makes them tick, why they respond the way they do. Also in a specific sense, knowing the people I lead (shepherd knowledge gained from close-quarter assessment).

Task: Just what is the nature of this job I have to do, for want of a better word "the job description", what are the parameters of this job, how far does my responsibility in this job go, what is God's job in this instance, how do I measure my effectiveness, and when will I know my job is over?

DOING:

Ministry: see Task above, but more than knowing *what* to do, it is the *actual doing* of what I know I must do, turning prophecies into plans, goals into action, do-by dates, fleshing out the vision (incarnating it), and getting my hands dirty.

Leading: I need the ability to stand back and evaluate my process as a leader, the reproducing of people in whom I am reproducing my talent/gift/ministry – (2 Tim 2:2), as well as making the adjustments so that the ministry flows unimpeded.

Following: we need more than a culture of leadership; we also need a culture of followership. Paul: "*Follow me as I follow Christ.*" We all have to follow someone. You can never say you have graduated and no longer need to follow anybody. This is the Safety Catch called humility.

PRACTICAL

1. Major on the interiors: the traditional mistake is to neglect this area in our rush to the more public side of who we are.

Being: Are there any areas requiring change / growth, e.g. you may need to be more patient, you may have difficulty confronting people, you may be lazy, a procrastinator, insecure etc? Write it/them down:

2. Move to the exteriors: the "*knowing*" and "*doing.*" How does the item identified above impact /influence/ colour your knowing and doing?

Knowing: What Biblical or Theological under-standing are you lacking which is manifesting in the growth area identified above?

Move to action: what are you going to do about it? Record what action you are going to take to improve your knowledge.

Doing: What skills are you lacking which manifest in the growth area identified?

Move to action: what action are you going to take to improve your skills? Record the action you are going to take to grow your skills.

Tending The Sheep

TO BE AN ELDER IS TO BE A SHEPHERD

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28)

We are under-shepherds. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we are to take seriously our responsibility, and calling, to shepherd His flock under His

SHEPHERD ACTION	SHEEP BENEFIT	TEXT
ownership of role	identity	The Lord is my shepherd
provision	refreshing reviving restoration	I shall not want He makes me lie down He leads me, restores
guidance	righteousness	He guides me in paths
presence	confidence	For you are with me
fathering	comfort	Your rod and your staff
approval empowering	identity empowered	You anoint my head
generosity	abundance	You prepare a table for me
mercy	expectation	Surely goodness and love
commitment	destiny	And I will dwell in Your house forever.

guidance and supervision.

shepherd, noun:

a person employed in tending sheep;
one who exercises spiritual care over a community, a pastor or minister.

Gk: pastor – “poimen” (1 Peter 5:1-2)

- “Poimen” is used a number of times in the NT, but (Eph 4:11) is the only place it is translated “pastor”. Every other time it appears in the Greek text, it is translated “shepherd”. (McArthur)
- “Poimen” emphasises the attitude of the elder. To be an elder he must have a caring heart.

This assumes:

- A sense within you that *you are called to this by God*
- A sense of *responsibility* for the sheep: love, feed, lead.
- A *close proximity* to the sheep (run your fingers through the wool).
- A *willingness to pay the price* (perhaps literally lay down your life for the sheep)
- An *irrepressible belief* in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform goats into sheep.

KEY TEXTS:

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me besides still waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the Valley of the

shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

EZEKIEL 34

GOD'S RESPONSE:

To the unGodly shepherds:

1. *Opposition from God:* "I am against the shepherds" (v10)
2. *Called to account:* "I will hold them accountable" (v10)
3. *Remedy:* "I will remove them from tending the flock" (v10)
4. *Result:* "I will rescue My flock" (v10), I will bring them out, I will pasture them, I will tend them."

To the UnGodly sheep:

(Their behaviour (v17-19) is the direct result of the failure in the shepherds.)

1. He will judge them. (v20)
2. He will stop their damaging of the flock (v22)
3. He will raise up Godly shepherds after His own heart (v23), to bring government and order so the flock may prosper (v25f)

Sheep benefit:

1. Safety (v14)
2. Food (v14)
3. Recovered (v16)
4. Strengthened and healed (v16)
5. Productive lives (v25f)
6. Strong and free sheep ((v27f)

JOHN 10

(v3) "He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. His sheep follow him because they know his voice."

>> PROACTIVE * DILIGENCE * RELATIONSHIP

(v11) "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. The hired hand abandons

the sheep and runs away, and cares nothing for the sheep."

>> DILIGENCE * INCONVENIENCED RESPONSIBILITY

(v14) "I am the Good Shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me."

>> IDENTITY * INTIMACY * INFORMED LEADERSHIP * RECIPROCATED AFFECTION

SHEPHERDING IS NOT:

1. **Building towards yourself** - If Jesus is not their True Shepherd, they will always want!
2. **Controlling people** - heavy-handed discipling is not what Jesus intended.
3. **Creating dependence** - the broken must become the repairers of cities long desolate, or God will not be glorified in their restoration (Isaiah 61: 1-9).
4. **Absolving the sheep of their responsibilities** - never do for a follower what they can do for themselves.

VEHICLES FOR SHEPHERDING

- Elders who live in an obvious sense of the call to be an elder.
- Life-changing sermons and teachings that a. feed, b. guide, c. discipline, d. encourage ("give courage to").
- Passionate prayer with (visitation) and for (warfare) the sheep.
- Godly government - watching out for and dealing with wolves, redressing damaging behaviour in the sheep (pattern versus event).
- Community structures – LifeGroup accountability relationships, peer shepherding, activating the flock to be a community that cares.
- Technology - phone calls, emails, letters.
- Lifestyle of generosity - gestures of kindness and thoughtfulness that reinforce and underscore the value / importance of the flock.
- Modelled life of the elder and wife – this secures the flock as they see

living examples that, by their very lives, declare this God-life is do-able.

- Secure shepherds - secure shepherds produce secure flocks.
- Using every available opportunity - change the way we look at hospitality, meetings (all of them), socials, one-on-one encounters.

HOW BROAD AND HOW DEEP IS YOUR PEOPLE-WELL? Will depend on

1. Your personality type,
2. Your upbringing,
3. Your life's experience,
4. Your people skills,
5. Your genuine desire to elder in a Biblical way,
6. Your private commitment to your own personal growth.

How do you deepen and broaden your people-well?

1. *You take your fears, prejudices and insecurities to the Lord,*
2. *You work on them – practice makes perfect,*
3. *You pray for people,*
4. *You touch people,*
5. *You diligently do the "little things" that in the end constitute greatness.*
6. *People themselves begin to make it easier for you to "reach them" when they see you are making an effort.*

EUGENE PETERSON ON PASTORING / SHEPHERDING

1. **The Pastor is a person in the community charged with responsibility for helping men and women live the faith sanely and truly in the immediate circumstances in which they find themselves.** *That means treating people with great dignity (not exploiting them in a religious cause), dealing with the times with great realism (not denying the pain of avoiding the difficulties), and presenting the Gospel with great imagination (not reducing it to "how to" hints for getting through the day).*

2. **Pastoring ... is a way of life** that uses weekday tasks, encounters, and situations *as the raw material for teaching prayer, developing faith, and preparing for a good death.*
3. **Being a pastor means learning to use language in which personal uniqueness is enhanced and individual sanctity recognised and respected.** It is a language that is *unhurried, unforced, unexcited* – the leisurely language of friends and lovers, which is also the language of prayer.
4. **Pastoring ... our most important work, which is directing worship in the traffic,** *discovering the presence of the Cross, in the paradoxes and chaos between Sundays, calling attention to the "splendour in the ordinary", and most of all, teaching a life of prayer to our friends and companions in the pilgrimage.*
5. My primary educational task as pastor was **to teach people to pray.**
6. Pastoral work, I learned later, is that aspect of Christian ministry that **specialises in the ordinary.** It is the nature of pastoral life to *be attentive to, immersed in, and appreciative of the everyday texture of people's lives* – the buying and selling, the visiting and meeting, the going and the coming.
7. Pastors especially, since we are frequently involved with large truths and are stewards of great mysteries, **need to cultivate conversational humility.** Humility means *staying close to the ground (humus), to people, to everyday life, to what is happening with all its down-to-earthness.*

8. Pastoral ministry increases in effectiveness as it discerns and discriminates among the forms of sin, and then loves, prays, witnesses, converses, and preaches the details of grace appropriate to each human face that takes shape in the pew.

One of the **greatest challenges** for the leader in the modern church is to NOT **LOSE** THEIR **NERVE** RE **PREACHING.**

9. If the pastor sees **inadequacy as a sign of sin** (not as an unfortunate feeling), he will respond by kindly and gently presenting the living God, pointing out the ways in which God is alive in the community. The instances of courage and grace that occur every week in any congregation are *staggering*. Pastoral discernment that *sees grace operating* in a person keeps that person in touch with the living God.
10. People come to us, **not because they are looking for God but because they are looking for a recommendation**, or good advice, or an opportunity, and they vaguely suppose we might be qualified to give it to them.

11. **Am I keeping the line clear between what I am committed to and what people are asking of me?** Is my primary orientation God's grace, His mercy, His action in Creation and covenant? *And am I committed to it enough that when people ask me to do something that will not lead them into a more mature participation in these realities, I refuse?* I don't like to think of my visits I made, counselling given, marriages performed, meetings attended, prayers offered – one friend calls it sprinkling holy water on Cabbage Patch dolls – solely because people asked me to do it and it didn't seem at the time that it would do any harm and, who knows, it might do some good. Besides, I knew there was a pastor down the street who would do anything asked of him.

12. **Pastors are in the word business.** We preach, we teach and counsel using words. People often pay particular attention on the chance that God may be using our words to speak to them. We have a responsibility to use words accurately and well.

Preaching In The Local Church

r **Donald Goggan:** Archbishop of Canterbury: "It has been said that some men's sermons correspond to the psalmist's description of the activity of the Almighty on a chilly day, *"He casteth forth His ice like morsels, who is able to abide His frost?"* Someone else: *"Most churches are like bankers' dinners: cold and correct, decorous and dead."*

Some of the challenges have to do with the following:

- **An increasingly self-sufficient constituency** that knows more about the Bible than any previous generation. "DIY Christianity."
- **An allergy in the culture towards submitting to the authority of a Book** that many consider obsolete in a modern democracy.
- **An increase in relativism** – the absence of absolute truth and the near veneration of agnosticism – **Ravi Zacharias:** *Never before has scepticism had such a brilliant halo around its' head. There is a glory about 'not knowing'. A high premium is placed on the absence of conviction, and open-mindedness has become synonymous with intellectual sophistication.*
- **A misplaced assumption that to be organic means to be speak off the cuff,** coupled with the casualness of delivery that diminishes preaching to a fireside chat between buddies. Perhaps our language is a problem here – we now speak of *talks, family chats, sharing* – and all the language is wonderfully relational but possibly resulting in a dismissing of preaching.

KEYS TO REMEMBER RE PREACHING IN LOCAL CHURCH

- **Preaching is God's idea:** In His wisdom God has chosen the foolish things to confound the wisdom of the wise. He has chosen preaching as the tool of announcement that His Kingdom has come. He has not changed His mind on this.
- **There is power in preaching:** *Things happen when people preach - lives change - especially when you preach a transforming Gospel!*
 - Lives are changed.
 - Minds are liberated.
 - Worldviews corrected.
 - Realities established.

Preaching, like worship is a *political act* - unless our preaching is a steady diet of psychological pep talks and soothing how to's. When we preach, we say *we have no King but Jesus*. We'll give Caesar his taxes but God gets the worship. Acts of the Apostles – the religious leaders wanted to shut up the apostles because they were *"filling Jerusalem with their teaching and were turning the city upside down."* The world has tried to muzzle preachers throughout the history of the church. Stephen, the first martyr was murdered because of a sermon he preached. *There is power in preaching.*

- **Preaching is a holy privilege:** **Phillips Brookes (1877)** *"Let us rejoice with one another that in a world where there are a great many good and happy things for men to do, God has given us the best and the happiest, and made us preachers of His truth."*

(2 Tim 4:1) READ Paul writes with holy sobriety – he winds up his fist: *"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His Kingdom, I give you this charge ... PLANT CHURCHES! No! GOVERN DILIGENTLY! No!*

– *"I give you this charge – charge is no small thing – it is a trust given,*

a responsibility of serious proportions –

PREACH THE WORD!!

Do you approach it like that or are you flippant and casual? This is holy ground and we should treat it like it is!

- **Passionless preaching is unforgivable:** Passionless—anything is unforgivable in the extreme! Is there a *more blasphemous* way to live? *Some of the greatest, most passionate preachers came from the shores of this United Kingdom.* Passion has everything to do with conviction, not personality. Passion has to do with *enthusiasm* = GK: “en-theos”. Passionless living has absolutely no place in the life of any Christian anywhere!! *Mr Bean goes to church!!* Background grind!
Richard Baxter: The Reformed Pastor: “*I preach’d as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men.*” Preachers ought to be gripped by the Text. Preachers ought to be like men with fire shut up in their bones. If it grips the preacher it will grip the audience.
Piper: Scientist Charles Meisner re **Albert Einstein’s** attitude to organised religion and preaching 50 years ago: “*I do see the design of the universe as essentially a religious question – that is, one should have some kind of respect and awe for the whole business. It’s very magnificent and shouldn’t be taken for granted.*”
John Piper says, “*Einstein must have looked at what the preachers said about God and felt that they were blaspheming.*”
He had seen much more majesty than they had ever imagined and they were just not talking about the real thing. They did not show a proper respect for the Creator of the universe.”
- **Elders govern from the pulpit through preaching:** Paul writes to **Timothy** and to **Titus** and in both he says elders should teach. In both

those letters Paul tells the 2 men that the job they are there to do will only be done with sound teaching and courageous preaching. The mechanisms by which the Kingdom will be established by them **is preaching and teaching.** In fact, *Paul cannot conceive of an elder who does not teach.* Why?

- ✓ Because preaching is one of the key places where an elder exercises authority.
- ✓ Because the pulpit is the place where direction is set, discipline is exercised and the sheep fed, watered and pastored.
- ✓ Because preaching is a father’s role and elders are fathers in the house.

Some of *the greatest breakthroughs* we have had in the past, and *increases in momentum* had to do with a fresh burst of anointed preaching from the elders.

- **Preparation honours God and inspires people:** (**Eccles 2:9-10**) “*And moreover, because the Preacher was wise he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find acceptable words, and what was written was upright – words of truth.*”
 - **Personal Preparation** – issue is Credibility: He was WISE – so people listened to him.
 - **Material Preparation:** he PONDERED, and SOUGHT OUT, and SET IN ORDER many proverbs.

Neh 8:8) “*They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.*”

MAKING IT CLEAR
GIVING THE MEANING
SO THE PEOPLE COULD
UNDERSTAND

Dan Baumann in Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology:

"Quality preaching does not happen by accident. It is the result of hard work, creative thinking, careful research, and a dependence upon the Holy Spirit. In other words, there is no shortcut to homiletical excellence."

- **The compelling power of a lived sermon: (2 Tim 3:10-17)** Gandhi: *"My life is my message, my message is my life."* (Acts 8:12) - *"But when they believed Phillip as he preached the Good News of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised."* There is no shortcut here either. In fact, your life is a more widely heard sermon than you think. Paul called the saints *"epistles read by many"*. So are the preachers - read by the congregation and the community.

WIERSBE: *"The message must be a living entity. It must grow out of the soil of our soul, and its roots must come from deep within your own experience and the study of God's Word."* *"It is not enough to have the authority of the Word behind the sermon; one must also evidence the power of a life lived under the authority of the Word. The pulpit is no place for borrowed blessings. They must flow out of the preacher's fellowship with God in order to be fresh and exciting."*

FREDERICK BEUCHER: *"Often, I am afraid, the Church is a place where preachers preach not out of their depths, but out of their shallows."*

- **Preach for a verdict:** What a shocking thing to lead a church, a cell group, to preach a sermon and never expect any fruit from your labours. Preach for a verdict. John Maxwell: Take the order! Call the people to something. Expect your **ORTHODOXY** to result in **ORTHOPRAXIS**.

WILLIAM H WILLIMON: *"About three weeks ago a woman came out*

after the service and said to me, "I know you would never want to hurt anyone with what you said, but I was really hurt by the sermon today." Suddenly, I caught myself thinking, "Why would you ever think we wouldn't want to hurt you?" I'm sorry; the material demands it! The thing that makes preaching tough is not simply how to have a coherent thought within 20 minutes or how to modulate the voice. The hard thing is Jesus! If we had something like Disneyland to preach, it would be easy. But we have Jesus to preach, and that makes bringing that to speech - with our language and culture and our sin - just really hard.

- **The preaching diet:**

Diets need to be: balanced, thought through, with the future in mind.

There is power in doing shortish series, and linked sermons that take us in a particular direction.

1. What is God doing and saying amongst us?
2. What are the gaps in our corporate theology?
3. What kind of season are we in right now?
What is going on in the world of your people right now? Iraq.
4. Arise, great preachers of these isles - *England hath need of thee* - so does Ireland and Wales and Scotland.

Will Essex produce another Spurgeon, will Epworth produce another John Wesley, North Hampton another William Carey, Old Richmond another John Wycliffe, and Edinburgh another John Knox?

Understanding Authority In The Local Church



WHY IS THIS UNDERSTANDING NECESSARY?

1. Because the Kingdom of God is *all about authority*: God's authority and Satan's plan is to subvert that authority in our lives.
2. Because the Church, family and society *cannot function* without proper Godly authority.
3. Because of the *rampant abuse* of authority in society.
4. Because our goal is *to remove the environmental resistance* that results from no understanding of / misunderstandings re authority, and which *hampers the mission* of the church.
5. Because of the *many filters* through which people see and understand authority.

HEALTHY CHURCHES NEED HEALTHY LEADERS

1. Leaders who themselves are *under authority*.
2. Leaders who *know how to live sanely* with authority.

3. Leaders who make the business of following a joy and not a health hazard.

THE ORIGINS & MISSION OF AUTHORITY

Authority comes from a particular source and it flows in a particular direction with a specific purpose in mind. Authority in the church is not about policing peoples' actions – it is about the Mission, which is the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth. Authority, for an elder, comes:

1. **From God:** (2 Cor 10:1f) Paul: "The authority *the Lord* gave us..." and then he tells *why* the authority was given them: "*for building you up rather than tearing you down.*" (2 Cor 13:10) ditto.
2. **From the call of God:** (Gal 1:1) "*Paul, an apostle, sent not from men nor by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father...*" There is an authority *built into the call* that will *help you get the job done*. It is a *gracing technology* given by the Lord – you represent Him, on His mission and in His church. (Matt 28:18) "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me – now, go, therefore...*"
3. **From a Godly example:** (2 Cor 6:3f) v11 – example: "*we have spoken freely to you and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us.*" V13 Paul calls for a "*fair exchange of affection*" – **WHY: the world will never know God sent Jesus unless it sees a daily fair exchange between believers as a way of life.** Which is why Christians should never get divorced (except in instances of brutality and abuse). Which is why Christians should be sent back to the church they just left, unless the leadership was abusive and unBiblical. *You can't argue with my example.* You can argue with my theology but you cannot argue with my lifestyle. (Eph 6:21) A very inter-

esting verse: Paul – “here’s my example and it authorises me.”

authority,

right or power or command to act

LIMITS OF AUTHORITY

1. Rich Lawton: “Only God is God.”
2. Human leadership is *delegated* leadership – from God. (Heb 13:10) – Leaders who will give an account. This leadership God delegates to us is prescribed – it has limits.
3. Human leadership must never take away the person’s initiative. People must freely choose their destiny. *The culture we want is one where people understand that referencing the elders is an intelligent act in their favour* – especially life-decisions: not silly little things. Ask an elder you think may disagree with you!

MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT AUTHORITY

1. **Elders have to “earn the right”** – not true. We join ourselves to the Body and in so doing we demonstrate our embracing of the elders. When Jan and I were invited onto Dudley’s team we saw it as a privilege and an honour and we gave our hearts right in the beginning. We never held out on him – “*he must prove himself first*”. Yes, time has helped. Yes, relationship has helped. But the onus was *on us to draw towards him* and when we did, when we made the effort, we grew to love him and Anne more.
2. **Elders have no authority** – they are benign advice givers and that’s it. Not true. Part of their function is ensuring group commitment to the expectations of Jesus, the Head of the Body. Paul berated the elders and people in Corinth for allowing sexual sin in the house and for doing nothing about it.

Our NT tone is relaxed and family and much of our methodology looks casual and non-religious. The foremost leaders – NT calls “elders” – have no titles, no trappings of rank. That *does not mean* we are without authority. I always watch closely when elders are appointed to see *how the folk respond to them* – ask myself: can this person accept the fact that their peer / “son in the house” is now their elder?

3. **People automatically accept the authority of the elder / leader** – not true. Depending on their background, people will submit to the *authority of the office* but that is not enough. Time Magazine: Lewinsky: Clinton affair in White House – in reference to Bill Clinton walking into the capitol Hill a senator said; “*I am standing up for the office of the President of the United States, but not for the man Clinton.*” People have **to transition** to the place where a respect for the office **becomes a love for the person** directly. THIS IS A PROCESS NO LEADER CAN DO FOR THE FOLLOWER.
4. **Authority is about wielding power** – Henri Nouwen: “*Jesus wants Peter to feed His sheep and care for them, not as “professionals” who know their clients’ problems and take care of them, but as vulnerable brothers and sisters who know and are known, who care and are cared for, who forgive and are being forgiven, who love and are being loved. I am speaking of a leadership in which power is constantly abandoned in favour of love.*”

How do we abandon power in favour of love?

- We remember we are accountable to God for what we do as leaders.
- We remember and live out Jesus' words not to lord it over the people as the Gentiles do.
- We don't appeal to our position and pull rank – we leads through persuasion and relationship, and we motivate through our example.
- We embrace the awkwardness of leadership – taking the higher road of leading in humility, being vulnerable without the artificial defences behind which leaders usually hide.
- We remember our own clay footedness. We live holy lives before God and while we do it we are careful to think we stand lest we fall ourselves.

PROMOTORS OF HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

1. **Secure leaders:** (John 13:1-5)
 - a. IDENTITY - SON - "Jesus knew the Father..."
 - b. FUNCTION – "put all things under His power..."
 - c. ORIGIN – "had come from God"
 - d. PURPOSE – "and was returning to God."
 - e. RESULT – v4 – begins with "SO" – because of a-e Jesus washed their feet.

Secure leaders: don't personalise everything, know how to bounce back, they secure people, and they treat people with **respect** because they respect **themselves**.

Sunday Times: March 16

2. **Submitted leaders:** (Matt 8:5-10) v9 – the centurion amazed Jesus ... v10 – Jesus was "astonished" at the man's faith – faith is all about authority – faith in Jesus' ability to heal the servant **because** of the

authority Jesus had received from the Father and as a military man, he understood authority.

There is no such thing in the Kingdom of God as an unsubmitted leader. Unsubmitted leaders are very, very dangerous. Unsubmitted husbands are abusive. Unsubmitted wives can poison a marriage. *Every leader has to lead out of a context of submission.* Church is not run on a business leadership model. Elders are under authority of one another and of apostolic people. Dudley is not out there on his own mission – he is accountable and he is submitted.

Leaders are to live submitted lives: submitted to God, to the prescriptions of the Word of God, to the people set in place by God to keep this vehicle called the Kingdom of God rolling forward.

Submission is a choice of the heart: you can say you are but you aren't till you are!

3. **Serious leaders:** by serious we mean leaders who realise that their heart beats for the sake of the Kingdom.

A leader whose *priority is the Kingdom*, whose **theme** and **passion** of their life is the Supremacy of God in all things!! Not leaders who think *this is a joke and a walk in the park*.

Leaders who know there is a job to be done and will do it without playing to the whims of the crowd who always want a lesser, easier option.

Leaders who are serious enough to lead the way Jesus wants them to lead. Foolish leading is also leadership that is unBiblical, controlling, disrespectful leadership.

4. **Servant leaders:** Jesus *totally revolutionised* the way man thinks about leadership. He said He came to serve, not to be served. He said the way up in the Kingdom is down. He *startled* the Pharisees, Pontius Pilate, the people. Even up until the resurrection, the disciples missed the point about power and authority.

Head
tables have
replaced the towel and
washbasin as
symbols of
leadership
among God's
people.

- Gene Wilkes

Wilkes – “A servant leader serves the mission and leads by serving those on mission with him.”

Mission is everything for the servant leader.

So is passion!! Lyle Schaller: “I think passion is the critical variable. I would insist the number one quality of a leader be passion.”

We need to draw passion and mission together.

Wilkes: “These leaders have a passion for the mission because the mission is so paramount in their lives that they have literally become servants to it. This passion for the mission drives the leader to recruit and empower others to join him on that mission.”

You will never become a servant leader until you first become servant to the leader.

Humble your heart
First be a follower
Find greatness in service
Take up the towel

Serving with an end in mind
– a particular MISSION – the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the earth. The point of service is to *demonstrate the life of Christ* on the earth.

What to look for in a Prospective Leader



HOUSE

he miracle is usually always in the house. The O.T. prophet encouraged the widow to grasp that the miracle she needed was closer than she anticipated. Likewise the *leaders you need are usually right under your nose*. If they are not, they can always be "prayed in" – especially if you work on the premise that God wants you to succeed *far more* than you could ever want to yourself! This is His church and He has an agenda. He will always give us what we need. He can have someone transferred by his company to your area. It may not even make economic sense for the company sending him to your town! God will bring you a man and a woman "of peace", with their children, their furniture and their dogs. Perhaps you need to ask Him. The Lydia's you need are closer than you think. So are the Timothy's and the Titus's you need. In fact, God could have already *strategically positioned* them in your community years before you planted into that community and they have been waiting patiently for you to arrive. *It's not hard for Him, you know!* Sometimes we have to ask a little more earnestly. And sometimes we have to *work a little harder* at developing the

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folk we already have. Usually it is the latter!

How inexcusable is it for the leader not to to have a passion for the advancement of the people he leads! How odd! How unlike the Godhead he so glibly claims to represent!

The tree of potential needs a little watering with the stimulant of Godly, careful leadership, mountain-conquering faith and breath-taking vision – you'll be amazed how the plant will flourish – all on its own. In (2 Tim 2:2) Paul writes: "*The things you have heard from me, among many witnesses, teach those to faithful men who will teach others.*" Pray for faithful men – that they will emerge.

A crucial context needs to be established. *We need to establish a culture of leadership*. Our Sunday meetings need to be leadership-training moments. We need to teach *people how to think like leaders*. And we must applaud them when they do! We need to call men and women to greatness. We need to believe in them.

You can be sure that no one else, except God of course - has ever believed in them!

Life has not called many to greatness. Some are the victims of shockingly insufficient parenting. The true father *lifts the head* of his sons and daughters and shows them *panoramas of potential they may never have seen on their own*. Bringing leaders through – into their inheritance as leaders – is *an art to be learnt*. It starts as an inside job - with wanting the best for your folk. It is fuelled by a passion to see people become all that their background said they could never be. It's about

believing that the New Genetic can truly produce a new identity and a new future.

Usually the problem lies with the inability in the leader to identify and develop the existent talent in the house.

The leaders you need may not look immediately like leaders, but they are present. You have to be a student of your flock. You have to develop an eye for detail – human detail, behavioural detail, conversational detail.

Look for the following. Ideally potential leaders exhibit some of the following:

1. They display an interest in their world (events, people, feelings, current events).
2. They have evidence of government on them (people listen when they talk, they have presence).
3. They know how to play in a team – they can subordinate their own desires.
4. They display a hunger for more - of God, His Word, and fellowship.
5. They come early to pray and seem to love being around people.
6. They are ordinary, down-to-earth people (not prima donnas).
7. They have a growing EIQ - and deal with setbacks in a positive way.
8. They are *possibilitarians* - Most of the NT shakers and movers were business people - none of Jesus' disciples were members of an establishment, none of the apostles were priests in the Temple. The leaders in the early Church were businesspeople, not theologians.
9. They are able to let go of the past and embrace what God is doing with us here and now.
10. They come to Leadership Development Times without having to be asked.

11. They know how to serve: watch when things need to be set up and cleaned up.

‘The reason Paul was able to **appoint elders quickly in any place was because he chose **entrepreneurial thinkers, who had been totally transformed by Jesus.**’**

- David Thompson

HOW TO RAISE UP LEADERS:

(Judges 2:6-7, 10-13, 18-19)

1. The measure of your success is this: what did you leave behind when you died / moved on?
2. The quality & quantity of leaders you raise up and release to ministry.
(2 Timothy 2:2) 4 generations: Paul & Timothy – reliable / faithful men / others.

PRACTICAL WAYS:

1. Make The Theological Shift

It is God's intention that we work in team - the Trinity is a team, man & wife = team, Jesus had a team, Paul had a team. If you do not have a team you are not Biblically accurate. Hurriedly transition from:

- Lone ranger to team player
 - Controller to facilitator
- Do you want to be effective? Be blessed? Leave a legacy? Impact

your world? It is impossible without team!

2. **Ask God To Open Your Heart To People**

The pulpit is a good place to hide away – to be removed from people. One can hide in one's busyness, in one's gifting. (1 Chron 12:18) "*We are yours, O David*" Hearts can be closed to others through personality dysfunction, through problems with upbringing, the fear of being hurt, the love of being in control (of emotions & situations), labouring under the impossible yoke of the illusion of perfection, through practicing a lifestyle of sin, and through the fear of being accountable.

3. **Spend Time With Them**

(Matthew 10:1) "*Jesus called them to be with Him*"

(Mark 3:13) Jesus walked with the disciples from village to village: taught them, ate with them, laughed with them, and ministered with them.

It takes time (regular time; fun time, leisurely time) to build into people's lives. This is the burning question: are you willing to take the time to send your influence into the future?

4. **Teach Them**

Formally (class room) & informally (life)

Discern their *gifts* (which are different) & help develop them.

(Mark 4:33-34) - teach them *all you know*.

- a. Be alert for *teachable moments* that come unexpectedly
- b. *Model* what you want them to learn and become
- c. Create a climate and culture that *values* personal & spiritual growth
- d. Expect transformation

4. **Encourage Them**

To encourage someone is to give them courage. Do it privately & publicly. Do it whenever you see something worth affirming.

5. **Be Gracious When They Make A Mistake**

(1 Thess 2:7) like a *mother*: draw them close

(1 Thess 2:11) like a *father*: encouraging, comforting, urging.

6. **Develop A Transparency Between Them And You**

Share some of your struggles with them – this binds you together.

7. **Develop The Ethos Of Esteeming One Another Highly**

Deal ruthlessly with competitiveness amongst leaders; maintain the unity of the team.

8. **Teach Them The Privilege & Pain Of Leadership**

They must understand it is a privilege to lay their lives down. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

9. **Get To The Men**

Society has downgraded the contribution of men.

10. **Develop A Culture Of Leadership**

Train everyone to be a leader. And because leadership is influence, everyone is a potential leader.

Forming A Team

ELDERS WORK IN TEAM

The NT assumption is that there is always a plurality of eldership. It is unbiblical to have a one-man-show.

In fact, such men never leave a legacy because everything dies when he dies. The Trinity is the perfect example of a community of Oneness, of team. Jesus had a team, and Paul had several teams. We must *embrace, celebrate* and *live out* team on all levels - husband and wife; elders amongst themselves; elders and deacons; elders, deacons and believer priests; congregations and translocal teams; translocal teams with translocal teams.

Team,

“a number of persons associated in a joint action or endeavour.”

(Webster’s Dictionary)

What is a team?

A team is a group of people with a common goal, straining together on the oar, pulling in the same direction. A team is a group of people playing, at their unique strengths, for the good of the team, with the purpose of winning. A team comprises individuals who joyfully subjugate their own interests for the sake of the entire team.

The necessity of team

As a team *we go further* than we would have on our own. We do more, reach more of our inheritance and we take more ground. Two heads are *always* better than one.

The team and the team captain

Every team needs a captain to help the team become all it was intended to be. He is not above them - but in front of them, and if there are elders who get paid from the congregational funds, he is not the boss of those elders in the sense the world understands it. Ultimately, there needs to be someone whom God has raised up to take the team forward. This leader of the team must be *in* the team, an integral part of that team, and needs to pull his weight on that team. Clearly, it is unhelpful not to reference the team leader from time to time. Because love and mutual submission is the atmosphere in which that team does its ministry, there is respect one for another. Elders are *brothers* who are to love one another, unashamedly and demonstrably. Followers need to see elders working close together, honouring one another, enjoying each other and respecting one another.

Attitudes and behaviours that bless the team leader and the team

The team, the people and the team leader are *magnificently served* when:

1. each team member loves God passionately, with all his heart and soul.
2. each team member joyfully loves the flock entrusted to them, desiring to open doors for them to grow and develop.
3. each team member does all he can to preserve the unity of the team, and to ensure the effectiveness of the team.
4. each team member takes responsibility for his own walk with God, for his prayer life and for his own daily devotional integrity.
5. each team member owns his own self-development process: viz. his spiritual formation into the image of Jesus as well as the development of his gifts and talents.

6. each team member exhibits an unquenchable sense of responsibility for the ministry he is leading and supervising.
7. each team member refuses to make the lead guy look like the "bad guy" by putting other priorities above that of the church and the Kingdom of God, which the lead guy then has to correct.
8. each team member loves and lives in truth - and that he promotes and sustains a culture of truth.
9. each married team member lives wisely with his wife and ensures she is included in the loop and that she is encouraged to add her unique contribution to the team.
10. each team member exercises team etiquette and understands the importance of communicating absences and whatever is necessary for the team's progress.

The Role of the Wife of the Elder

CELEBRATING THE DIFFERENCE

Men and women were created equal in value, equal in importance and equal in God's eyes. *They have equal value but differ in function.* One function is not more important than the other. The NT is clear that government is male. In no way does this dismiss women as inconsequential. Women have a vital role to play in the church. We do not believe women are to be elders, but we do believe they make a contribution through the husband and wife team. Women can minister anywhere and on any level, except exert governmental authority. Phoebe was a large capacitated translocal deacon. (Rom 16). Lydia and Priscilla were influential women in the Book of Acts.



Attitudes and practices that bless the team and team leader:

1. She feels the sense of calling with her husband and is willing to develop along with her husband in the specifics of that calling.
2. She does all she can to help her husband fulfil his function as elder.

(Prov 31 : 11) *"Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life."*

3. She recognises her power for good (or destruction) in his life. (Prov 31 : 23) *"Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat amongst the elders of the land."*
4. She is passionately in love with the Lord her God.
5. She truly loves the flock and joyfully takes their responsibility as a couple towards the sheep very seriously.
6. She is committed to developing herself, her gifts and her talents that God has given her in her own right.
7. She values and manifests a commitment to a daily devotional discipline and loves the Word of God.
8. She understands that God *always calls a family* and that this may call for an embracing of inconvenience, extra pressure and extra stretch in capacity. She is learning that God never calls without giving *grace* to fulfil that call.
9. She guards her heart against satan's devices and is learning contentment with what she has, rejoicing in God's provision for the family.

Administering the Emotional Component of Ministry

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF



Your greatest challenge as a leader may not be the demonic realm, trying circumstances and human opposition. Your greatest challenge may very well be **YOURSELF**.

“Beware of no man
more than
yourself;
we carry our worst
enemies within
us.”

- Charles Spurgeon

Our intention is to impact our generation. *Our intention is to plant and raise healthy NT Biblically functioning communities in every village, town and city.*

Our intention is to drive back the forces of darkness.

Our intention is to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth.

And you know what they say about good intentions. THEY DO NOT ALWAYS GO ANYWHERE!!! In fact prophetic words spoken over us are not usually without condition.

In fact, **Steve Farar** claims in his book, *Finishing Strong*, that 1 in 10 who start in ministry at 21 are still on track by the age of 65. **Finishing is not guaranteed.** The anointing will never be enough. Gifting will help you even less. The adulation of the crowd will not carry you to the finishing tape. Relating to an apostolic / prophetic team is good, but not enough. Even accountability relationships have their limitations. The race is not to the swift or the strong!! The race is to those who PAID ATTENTION.

Saul is a good example of someone who never finished because he never paid attention. He was called, he was anointed, he was gifted, he prophesied – and yet he died a grotesque suicide death. (1 Samuel 10: 1) *“Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul’s head and kissed him, saying, “Has not the Lord anointed you leader over His inheritance?”* Here are some of the issues Saul never addressed:

SELF-DOUBT: (1 Sam 9:21) *“Saul answered, ‘But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin Why do you say such a thing to me?’* What thing? - v20 – *“Saul you are the desire of all Israel”.* Inferiority will destroy those who refuse to shrug off its paralysing grip. Inferiority will make you an orphaned spirit leader. Leaders with orphaned spirits produce followers who are orphaned. It lingers in the atmosphere over congregations like the Tokyo smog. Orphaned leaders scrap like

street urchins for recognition, for affirmation, for attention. They always work themselves into the headline. They never produce any great leaders because only small-spirited people end up remaining with them.

FEAR: they go looking for Saul to introduce him as king but cannot find him: (1 Sam 10:22) *"And the Lord said, 'Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage.'" Fear of the demands of the God-moment you and I are to step into. (1 Sam 15:24) "I have sinned. I violated the Lord's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them."*

REJECTION: after Samuel had introduced Saul as king in (1 Sam 10) v 27 reads: *"But some troublemakers said, 'How can this fellow save us? They despised him and brought him no gifts. BUT SAUL KEPT SILENT."*

How you deal with rejection will determine if you do the will of God in your generation. Secure leaders rejoice in the success of those following behind them. *"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."* Unless you deal with a tendency to rejection you will lock yourself into unGodly responses. Some of Saul's unGodly responses include: MANIPULATION, BETRAYAL AND DUPLICITY.

In fact he *successfully reproduced* that in his daughter Michal - her famous derision of David's abandoned worship must be seen in the *context of her dysfunctional family led by a dysfunctional father.*

The great paradox of the Kingdom - is that God chooses to use frail men and women. Paul: *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."*

**"God has not given
US**

the mandate to
abuse the clay pot."

- Archie Hart

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR LIFE: your health, your emotional health, your fitness, your diet, your inter-personal finesse.

E.I.Q.

EIQ: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

Swiss psychologists Salovey & Mayer coined the phrase *"emotional intelligence quotient"* to describe qualities like *"understanding one's feelings, having empathy for others and the regulation of emotion in a way that enhances living."*

The basics of EIQ include:

1. Knowing your feelings and using them to make life decisions you can live with,
2. Being able to manage your emotional life without being hijacked by it - not being paralysed by depression or worry or swept away by anger.
3. Handling feelings in relationships with skill and harmony,
4. Persisting in the face of set backs and channelling your impulses in order to pursue your goals.
5. Empathy - reading other people's emotions without their having to tell you what they are feeling.

Interesting discoveries:

1. IQ may not be the true measure of human intelligence.
2. Surveys indicate that most failed executives in US and Europe were dismissed - not for technical inability - but largely because of *"interpersonal flaws."* In fact, the

majority of missionaries who return home never to go back to the field, stay at home because of inter-personal bun fights with OTHER MISSIONARIES on the field!!!

3. Emotional dysfunction is one of the largest causes of learning disabilities in school.

The ministry (particularly those who are paid elders and wives) is a *brilliant place to hide out*. Paul says he is a father to the Corinthians and not an instructor. One can minister out of this instructor mode and the very transmission of information to another becomes a barrier between the two.

The pulpit is a great place for *dysfunctional people* to hide away - but not for long. You could, in days gone by, hide behind the "*don't touch God's anointed*" defence mechanism. Fortunately the culture of today won't put up with that any more. Paul is a father, he says - and for fathering to be effective - the **children need to get close to him**. That's a *proven and documented psychological fact*. Dysfunctional leaders, however, are not happy with people getting close to them. They are aloof, detached and they are not people-people.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO ENSURE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

1. **Stay Close To The Father:** there is nothing more stabilising and encouraging than the presence of God.
2. **Saturate Yourself With The Knowledge Of His Divine Approval In Your Life:** you and I are not merely the recipients of some Divine Job Description - we are the apples of His eye. When you live for His approval and not man's you will be healthy. "*If you are moved by men's compliments; you'll be*

crushed by their criticism." Live for an audience of One. (Prov 29:25) "Fear of man ..."

3. **Admit Your Humanity:** you are a work in progress; you are not Michael the Archangel incarnate. You have your own sheep needs. You have areas of personal dysfunction.

You are the product of your background - good and bad stuff - the bad stuff needs to be attended to. The assumption of perfection is not only stupid but also dangerous. Do not be seduced by the lie that you are invincible!!

4. **Become A Scholar Of Your Emotional Profile:** know thyself!!
5. **Talk To Your Head And Protect Your Heart:** (Prov 4:23) - have an aggressive, pro-active posture.
6. **Develop A Sense Of Humour:** lighten up.
7. **Exercise Control Over Your Diary:** Q: are you at the mercy of another's agenda? Worse: Q: "Do you have an inordinate need to be needed?" - not only is this immature, it is just plain dangerous.
8. **Never Forget The People Do Not Belong To You:** you and I are eunuchs; we take care of Another's Bride.
9. **Pray For Discernment:** the Gifts of the Spirit should be operative in our everyday lives and they should keep us from asking wrong choices, accepting wrong invitations and running after wrong causes. Q: "What's really going on here?"
10. **Develop Your People Skills:** we are in the people business, discover

and practice the art of successful interaction with people.

11. **Trust God To Vindicate You:** (1 Peter 2:21)
12. **Practice Humility:** in your dealings with people, in your own thoughts, serve by example. Eugene Peterson says the word humble derives from "humus" meaning *close to the ground*.
13. **Get A Truly Biblical Understanding Of Pastoring:** (Isaiah 61) - the broken, confused, the marginalized, abused, lonely people are to become the plantings of the Lord, the repairers of the broken cities.

If you find a congregation where the basket cases remain basket cases year after year, you will also find absolutely finished leaders - emotionally wasted people - who never knew that *the end goal of pastoring* was that He would be glorified by the people becoming more than the sum total of their wounds.

14. **In Dealings With Others Always Be Absolutely Truthful:** "live honestly = live healthily"
15. **Always, Always Get The Facts First:** Proverbs says if you run ahead without the facts you're an idiot.

16. **Develop True Friendships:** with people inside and outside the congregation.
17. **Submit To God's Process For You:** don't try to be somewhere else in God. Unbridled ambition, continuous comparison with other leaders, other congregations will eventually kill you. Enjoy the moment God has you in now - savour it, because promotion will come and when it does you might wish you were back at square one.
18. **Don't Dump Problems With Others On Your Spouse:** if you are married.

Ten Steps to Sexual Sin for

Christian Leaders and How Not to Take Them

by John Piper

"Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12

Pitfall #1: Falling in love with the present world.

"For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica." (2 Timothy 4:10)

What is it about the world that leaders in particular are tempted to love? The answer of Jesus is clear:

Acclaim and Prestige

"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts." (Luke 20:46)

Riches and Pleasures

". . . but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature." (Luke 8:14)

Successful leadership generally exposes a person more and more to the alluring forces of prestige and makes an array of worldly pleasures more and more accessible (because of travel, higher salary, wider circulation, etc.).

Protection: Think long and hard about the deadly poison of world-love . . . *"If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. . . The world is passing away, along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15, 17)*

"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?"

Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4)

. . .and ponder the never-ending delights of the mountain spring of God's approval and fellowship and beauty.

"You put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound." (Psalm 4:7)

"Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." (Psalm 73:25-26)

The spell of sin's fascination is broken by the superior pleasures of the presence of God.

Pitfall #2: Loss of horror at offending the majesty of God's holiness through sin.

When David committed adultery with Bathsheba and put her husband to death, God did not confront David with the sanctity of marriage and the value of human life. He confronted him with the horror of despising God.

"Nathan said to David, 'Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? . . . Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah?'" (2 Samuel 12:9-10).

Are leaders under so much pressure to make people happy (lest they lose their crowds) that they forsake the message of God's holiness and sin's horror? And is the result that they gradually turn sovereign grace into powerless leniency, and then license, and then actually believe it themselves, and act on it, saying, "Where sin abounds grace will much more abound!" (Romans 6:1)? Is not a leader drifting to destruction when he no longer commends the gouging out of eyes as preferable to sin?

"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better

that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.” (Matthew 5:29)

In other words, perfectly innocent and good things may need to be sacrificed for the sake of vigilance against sin. But this will not happen where a leader has lost his horror at offending the holiness of God.

Protection: Meditate on the biblical truth that all our acts are acts toward God and not just toward man . . .

“Against you and you only have I sinned!” (Psalm 51:4)

. . .and that God is so holy and pure that he will not countenance the slightest sin, but hates it with omnipotent hatred.

“You are of purer eyes than to see evil, and cannot not look at wrong.” (Habakkuk 1:13).

“The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but he loves him who pursues righteousness.” (Proverbs 15:9)

. . .and that the holiness of God is the most valuable treasure in the universe and the very deepest of delights to those whose way is pure.

“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.” (Psalm 29:2) “The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 29:19)

Pitfall #4: Succumbing to itching ears as love of truth evaporates.

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

Once the love of truth is weakened by the love for ears, integrity has no leg to stand on.

Every manner of rationalization and compromise to meet the demands of the expanding audience take over.

Difficult doctrines are omitted, moral and theological problems are oversimplified, man-pleasing teachings of health, wealth, and prosperity become more attractive, and dishonest measures are condoned for the sake of the kingdom. What does this have to do with sexual temptation? A mentality of relativism and expediency begins to govern the mind. This weakens all firm moral resolve. The audience is to be massaged – the itching ears are to be scratched. Why? To gratify the leader’s pursuit of power and pleasure. And soon the same procedure governs sexual relations: anything is okay if you are satisfying an itch. Scratching itching ears is a very warm and personal thing. So it is easy for such leaders to contrast their approach with the “cold” concern for truth. And so immunity from doctrinal criticism is created with a heavy dose of relational antibodies. The language of love and forgiveness and acceptance abounds – but for those who have eyes to see, it is a camouflage to cover the abandonment of a love for truth.

“The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)

Protection: Cultivate a love for truth, even in its smallest details, and turn a deaf ear to the desires of men to have their ears scratched with vague moralisms that massage them in their sin.

“Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone’s opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God.” (Mark 12:14)

“One who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much; and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.” (Luke 16:10)

Most compromise with the truth begins in small things. I heard of one evangelist who lost all credibility with a third-world helper because he criticized his counselors for not watching the audience after he had said that every eye would be closed. "One who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much."

Pitfall #5: A vanishing attention to Scripture.

This is not quite the same as #4. Here I have in mind the role Scripture begins to play (or not play) in the ministry of the word.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

It is the Scripture that reproves us when we are headed in the wrong direction; corrects and turns us in the right way; and then trains us how to stay there. It makes the leader complete and ready for every good work. But in the ministry of many leaders it begins to take a back seat to storytelling, and social analysis, and family discussions, and psychological diagnoses, and all kinds of things which in themselves are innocent, but which begin to usurp the priority of the inspired word of God.

The Bible begins to get token reference, exposition recedes, noble slogans (like peace, justice, kingdom, mutuality, grace, acceptance, wholeness) begin to replace specific sentences, contextual considerations diminish, moral generalities begin to replace attention to grammatical detail, and soon the Bible, in its pointed specificity, is not the authority. The ideas of man are. Now what does this have to do with sexual temptation? The lusts of the flesh can much more easily exploit a fuzzy moral generality than it can a firm, precise, specific, Biblical prohibition. **There is a hermeneutic that leads to adultery.**

Loose and sloppy handling of Scripture eventually leads to loose and sloppy living.

Protection: Give yourself untiringly to the study, meditation, and memorization of Holy Scripture.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

"On his law he meditates day and night." (Psalm 1:2)

"I have stored up my word in your heart, that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11)

Here I speak not of sermon preparation but of what I call "going out to pasture" – resting and ruminating on the word of God. It is savoring for the sake of life, not seeking for tomorrow's text.

Pitfall #6: A growing disregard for the spiritual good of his followers.

An Old Testament refrain is that when the king sinned, the people were ruined.

"The Lord will strike Israel. . . and give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and made Israel to sin." (1 Kings 14:15-16)

This incentive for a leader not to sin diminishes as a disregard for the people takes over. When leaders sin, the people suffer. **And when the leaders don't care for the people anymore, that ceases to be a brake on their own lusts.** Right after saying that the scribes love salutations in the market places and the best seats in the synagogues, Jesus says, without even starting a new sentence, that these leaders ". . . devour widows houses. . ." (Mark 12:40 = Luke 20:47). **The point is that the more we love the prestige of our leadership the less we will love the people we lead.** And the less we love them, the less we will care what becomes of them. **And so the vigilance to guard ourselves from sin**

for their sake will vanish, and the consequences of sexual immorality will not seem as dreadful as it once did.

Protection: Labor in praying and caring to stir up your heart to love all your people.

"May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all." (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

"Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." (Hebrews 10:24)

Do not assume too quickly that you do not love your people. An amazing affection can be born in the disciplined and prayerful exercise of pastoral duty.

Pitfall #7: Disregard for the biblical mystery of marriage.

"A man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." (Ephesians 5:31-32) The mystery of marriage is that God created it to be a drama of Christ's relation to the church. How we treat our wives is a dramatic statement of how we think Christ should treat the church. How wives treat their husbands is a dramatic statement of how they think the church should treat Christ.

The deepest Biblical meaning of marriage has to do with Christ and how he is portrayed to the world in the public drama of marriage. **Therefore adultery is like casting Jesus Christ in the lead role of an X-rated movie.** Therefore one long step toward adultery is to disregard the Biblical mystery of marriage.

Protection: Remind yourself repeatedly that your marriage is a living drama of Christ's relationship to the church. Let your thoughts about your spouse rise from the ordinary to the extraordinary by faith in the truth of Ephesians 5:31-32.

"This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church." We simply must recover the wonder of this truth. Marriage has to do with God, not just two people trying to be fulfilled.

It is a mission of revelation to the world. It is an extraordinary calling. And adultery is an appalling desecration of the image of Christ and his church.

Pitfall #8: Compartmentalizing of the leader's life.

In the New Testament the leader's home life is an essential part of his qualification for church leadership (1 Timothy 3:4, 12). In other words, the New Testament will not allow us to compartmentalize our life so that some parts of it are irrelevant to the issue of leadership. One stepping stone toward adultery is the compartmentalizing of life that says, "Well, this area is really not at the heart of my ministry and so one sin in this area need not jeopardize my success in another.

Protection: View everything – absolutely everything – as woven together by its relationship to the value of the glory of God.

"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)

"Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Colossians 3:17)

Would that every leader could explain to his people how to drink orange juice to the glory of God and then be able to say with all earnestness why this is not nitpicking. One area of life not done for the glory of God is a pocket of rebellion threatening to become a coup.

Pitfall #9: A sense of being above the necessity of suffering and self-denial.

Right after telling Timothy that as a leader he should "entrust (the truth) to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2), Paul says, "Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3)

Generally, with successful leadership comes the possibility of avoiding certain kinds of suffering. There is more money, more people ready to do you favors, more expectation to go first class, more freedom to delegate work, etc.

Very easily the mindset emerges that it is indeed fitting for me not to suffer.

Perhaps there is a high lifestyle appropriate for my position of prestige. Perhaps the perks of power are a good testimony to the goodness of God. Gradually the leader begins to justify exorbitance of all kinds because he is doing his part for the war effort by being the public rallying point for God's cause. And so there is not need to live like a common soldier. He is so important in the church or the organization that he is above the ordinary demands of suffering and discipline.

Protection: Never forget the promise: "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). And never forget that the Son of Man had no place to lay his head (Luke 9:58). And develop a Biblical theology of futility and suffering, especially from Romans 8:17-30.

"Not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (Romans 8:23)

There is a crying need for leaders who say with Thomas, "Let us go up and die with him" (John 11:16). We would do well to read the story of Raymond Lull, the Medieval missionary to the Muslims of Tunis. He shared the Franciscan "mania for martyrdom" and gave himself to die when he was over 80.

Let us listen to Elisabeth Elliot's voice of discipline, and ponder the title of her biography of Amy Carmichael, *A Chance to Die*.

Pitfall #10: Giving in to self-pity under the pressures and loneliness of leadership.

The stronger the impulse of self-pity, the more inclined we are to reward ourselves with unusual treats. **The more we pity ourselves for how hard life is, the more easily we justify a little extra pleasure – even illicit sexual pleasure.**

What goes on inside the head of a Christian leader when he is about to fall for the affection of another woman and commit adultery? I don't know. But perhaps something like this:

"Nobody else understands my pressures. Nobody else seems to feel for me in my loneliness the way she does. If any of them knew what I was going through in this leadership role, they would understand why I need this kind of embrace, I need this kind of "unconditional acceptance". I have borne enough of the burden of being everybody's spiritual example; I can't take it any more. And I don't care if they don't approve."

Self-pity is a subtle and deceptive power. It looks so meek and weak. But underneath is the partner of pride and a blind leader into the ditch.

Protection: Embrace the essence of "Christian Hedonism" – the doctrine that no one who suffers the loss of any earthly blessing in the service of Christ will fail to be repaid a hundred-fold now (with persecutions!) and in the age to come, eternal life (Mark 10:29-30). In other words, acknowledge that self-pity is unbelief in the promises of Jesus Christ. Paul had a reason to be self-pitying if anyone did. At the end of his life almost all had deserted him in one of his greatest hours of need. How did he handle it?

"At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me

*the message might be fully proclaimed
and all the Gentiles might hear it.”
(2 Timothy 4:16-17)*

The Lord – and he alone – must be our portion, or we will cave in to self-pity and all the sin it brings. This is the last defense against sexual temptation – or should we say, offense – the overwhelming power of the beauty of Christ, and the irresistible lure of everlasting fellowship with him.

Finishing Strong

Avoid The Ambush of Adultery

"Truth is heavy, so few men carry it"
(Jewish Proverb)

Approximately 1 in 10 young men who start out zealous and in 'full-time ministry' actually finish strong! Along the way they fall prey to the enemy's ambushes. Listen to this sad story:

"John Bisagno has been pastoring First Baptist of Houston for a number of years. When John was about to finish college, he was having dinner at his fiancée's house one night. After supper, he was talking with his future father in law, Dr Paul Beck, out on the porch. Dr Beck had been in ministry for years, and that was inevitably the subject toward which the conversation turned.

"John, as you get ready to enter the ministry, I want to give you some advice," Dr Beck told the younger man. "Stay true to Jesus! Make sure that you keep your heart true to Jesus every day. It's a long way from here to where you are going to go, and Satan's in no hurry to get you." The older man continued. "It has been my observation that just one out of ten who start out in full time service for the Lord at 21 are still on track by the age of 65. They get shot down morally, they're shot down with discouragement, they're shot down with liberal theology, they get obsessed with making money... but for one reason or another 9 out of 10 fall out." The 20 year old Bisagno was shocked. "I just can't believe that!" he said. "That's impossible! That just can't be true." "Bisagno told how he went home, how he took one of those blank pages in the back of his Scofield Reference Bible and wrote down the names of 24 young men who were his peers and contemporaries.



These were young men in their twenties that were sold out for Jesus Christ. They were trained for ministry and burning in their desire to be used for the Lord. These were the committed young preachers who would make an impact for the Lord in their generation. Bisagno relates the following with a sigh: "I am now 53 years old. From time to time as the years have gone by, I've had to turn back to that page in my Bible and cross out a name. I wrote down those 24 names when I was just 20 years of age. 33 years later, there are only 3 names remaining of the original 24." In the Christian life, it's not how you start that matters. It's how you finish." (Steve Farrar, *Finishing Strong*, pg 15.)

And what is the main way Satan knocks out 9 of those 10 men? What is the chief ambush to watch out for? "Satan's all-time, Numero Uno, time-proven tactic for snaring men and keeping them from finishing strong is sexual immorality. And the statistics prove it." (Steve Farrar) Listen to this tragic tale of a knock-out due to adultery:

"I woke up with a start. Outside it was still dark, I had been dreaming again, but it was not the usual fuzzy type. The dream had been so vivid: A man's hand grasping the gun, his finger ready on the trigger. It was all so clear. Although I had not seen his face. I knew whose hand it was. A cold shiver ran up my spine as I pulled the blankets closer about my neck and tried to get back to sleep. A few days later the phone rang. It was Maurice, the man in my dream. "Barney, I need to see you urgently; could you come to our house as soon as possible?"

"Sure," I responded and then proceeded to relate to him my dream, ending with, "and the hand holding the gun was yours."

He gasped audibly then his voice quivering with emotion, he said, "If you knew how many times during the past weeks I have put a gun to my head you would be amazed. I just didn't have the guts to pull the trigger." Who was Maurice? An ex-convict? A drug addict? A member of an armed gang? No! He had been a Baptist pastor with a very successful ministry. He was a good preacher with a vibrant personality. On Sunday mornings his church service was packed. Married with 2 children, he had everything going for him – at least until Liza came on the scene.

She was sixteen years old and had run away from home because she was terrified of her mother – a spiritualist medium. So, with no home and no one to care for her, room was made for her at the Baptist manse. Six months later Maurice abandoned his loving wife and precious children and took off with Liza. It wasn't long before they had a baby. 18 months later a second one arrived. Finally, Maurice obtained a divorce and married Liza. At this point they moved to Basingstoke. They came to a few of our services but it was too much for Liza; they stopped coming because she wept uncontrollably through each meeting. Months had passed without seeing them until the telephone call. I immediately drove to their home, mulling over in my mind what I might say when I got there. If God had taken the trouble to warn me in a dream, surely he hadn't given up on Maurice. Coupled with this, I had a deep sense that there was some deep cause of Maurice's weakness lurking in his past; some major infection that existed long before Liza came into his life. As I drove along I lifted my heart to the Lord for the key that would unlock the situation; gradually a clear impression settled in my mind.

Something had happened to Maurice when he was a young teenager that had severely damaged him. I was convinced it was irreparable unless God supernaturally intervened. It had been a time bomb, slowly ticking away until it exploded.

On my arrival he further explained why he had turned suicidal. Liza had found a new lover; in fact it was a neighbour just a few houses away. He was even willing, if necessary, to share her but she had made it clear she wanted to leave him now and move in permanently with the other man. I couldn't believe my ears. Maurice had fallen from shepherding God's people to sharing his wife with another man. It was incomprehensible. Even as I write this I cannot help but feel dismay. How could a man throw away the high and holy privilege of serving the Lord of heaven and earth, not to mention forfeiting all the promised blessings of the age to come, for just a few fleeting moments of sexual pleasure? It is beyond my understanding, yet we mortals seem to go on destroying our lives and ministry needlessly. I related to Maurice my prayer asking God for the key and the subsequent revelation concerning his youth. This was his response. At 13 he began attending a large evangelical Baptist church and soon responded to an appeal to receive Christ as his Saviour. The man who counselled him was the church organist; unfortunately he was also a practising homosexual. After Maurice had finished praying he seduced the lad into committing a sexual act. They continued a homosexual relationship right up to his entrance into Bible College, which meant eight years' indulgence in gross sin. Satan had successfully ensnared a young man, creating in him a character fault which, left uncorrected, was to rob him constantly of his joy in the Lord as the Accuser relentlessly reminded him of his guilty past. Sadly, Maurice rejected my offer of help and friendship." (Barney Coombs, Practical Pastoring, pg 50)

Steve Farrar tells another sobering tale:

"I remember having a lunch conversation several years ago with a very successful, married, 30 something guy who was an active member of a very solid, Evangelical church in the city. He had just read my book 'Point Man' and posed this question to me; "Why did you spend at least 100 pages of your book discussing sexual temptation?" He asked the question as though it was a passing curiosity to him. "Because I think sexual temptation is the number one issue in the lives of most men, and I think it's the primary way that the enemy picks off Christian men," I replied. "Do you really believe it's that serious a problem?" he asked. "Yes, I do. I think its epidemic." I got the distinct impression he found that hard to believe. Six months later, a prominent married woman in that church turned up pregnant by the man that asked me that question. And it wasn't his wife. She was some other guy's wife." (Finishing Strong, pg 71)

Consider these horrifying statistics and true story about pornography at a Christian conference:

"In regard to pornography, 41% of all men reported having done one of the following in the last twelve months: watching an X-rated movie, visiting a club with semi-nude or nude dancers, purchasing sexually explicit books, magazines, erotic devices or sex toys, or calling a sex phone number. But of course, those statistics have no relationship to Christians who believe in the authority of the bible, are pro-life, and are committed to their families, right? Think again. A number of years ago a national conference for church youth directors was held at a major hotel in a city in the mid-west. Youth pastors by the hundreds flooded into that hotel and took nearly every room.

At the conclusion of the conference, the hotel manager told the conference administrator that the number of guests who tuned into the adult movie channel broke the previous record, far and away outdoing any other convention in the history of the hotel." (Finishing Strong, pg 72)

Adultery Insurance: The central issue in insurance is risk. If you were to approach an insurance company about being insured about committing adultery, how likely is it that they would give you insurance? How at risk are you?

Dr. Howard Hendricks surveyed 246 men who were in the ministry and fell into adultery within a 2 year period of time. He found 4 correlations between all of them:

- None were involved in any kind of personal accountability group.
- None were having a daily time of prayer, Scripture reading, and worship.

Over 80% of them became sexually involved with another woman as a result of counselling them. In other words, they were spending significant amounts of time with women other than their wives.

Without exception, each of the 246 had been convinced that moral failure "will never happen to me."



We need to ask ourselves:

- Do you spend personal time with the Lord in prayer and Bible reading at least 3 times a week?
- Are there at least one or two men in your life with whom you have built friendship based on trust, confidentiality, & accountability?
- Are you currently spending significant time with any attractive women other than your wife?
- Are you absolutely sure that you could never fall?

If you answered:

- 1 wrong answer = moderate risk.
- 2 wrong answers = serious risk.
- 3 wrong answers = severe risk.
- 4 wrong answers = dead meat!

What level of risk are you at? What are you going to do to reduce that risk?

If you are in the last category, it is not a question of if you will commit adultery but when will you commit adultery. No 'moral' insurance company would even consider insuring you! You are beyond risk - you are a certain casualty!

THE DANGER AREAS

Barney Coombs mentions 3 danger areas; spiritual affinity, counselling & familiarity (which may better be described as intimacy). He does such a good job that I will quote the entire extract:

"I'd like to show three main areas of danger:

Spiritual affinity

The first one and probably the most deceptive is spiritual affinity. Sertorius Caputa, a Catholic father made this telling point:

"The devil endeavours first to infuse a love for the virtue of the individual and thus inspire a security that there is no danger.

He then excites sentiments of affection for the person and afterwards tempts to sin and thus he causes great havoc."

Saint Thomas said:

"Although carnal affection is dangerous to all, it is yet more so for those who associate with persons that seem to be spiritual, for even though the beginning is pure frequent familiarity is dangerous and the more the familiarity increases the more the first motive is weakened and purity is defiled. The devil knows well how to conceal danger. In the beginning he sends out poison darts but only those that inflict slight wounds and kindle an affection. However, in a short time the persons begin to act toward each other not like angels as in the beginning but like beings clothed with flesh. The looks are not immodest but they are frequent and reciprocal, their words appear to be spiritual but are too affectionate. Each begins frequently to desire the company of the other."

Involvement in intercession, the participation of musicians and singers in praise and worship ministry and ministry in deliverance are some of the Godly activities where naïve believers have fallen prey to the Enemy.

Counselling

The second danger is that of counselling. Repeated counselling sessions with wives of troublesome, unbelieving husbands or single women (especially those recently divorced or widowed) provide unbelievable opportunities for the devil to trap an unsuspecting leader. Sid Cheal, a real father in the faith, advised, "Never give lifts to women when you are alone unless it is absolutely necessary," and, "Never counsel women alone. If it's unavoidable, always leave the door ajar."

Familiarity (intimacy)

Familiarity with lady members of staff is a very dangerous past time. St Bernhard once wrote, "To be familiar with a woman and to preserve chastity requires greater virtue than to raise a dead man to life."

The sharing of marriage difficulties and other family concerns, lunch with your secretary or suggestive or flippant remarks provide a conducive atmosphere for the devil to strike a lethal blow. Lyndon K. McDowell, writing in the USA magazine 'Ministry' on the dynamics of ministerial morality, said, "When any two people of opposite sex work closely together sexual feelings will almost inevitably be aroused." (Practical Pastoring pg 55-57)

We would do well to be very careful of these three areas which are treacherous seas to the ship of our faith.

Time Bombs

Avoiding these three pitfalls may be hard enough on its own, but if you add the fact that many people have hidden time bombs ticking away; it makes for an even more combustible combination.

What is a time bomb? It is a fuse-line or fault line – a character weakness, unresolved issue, or propensity to sin that we have. These problems may not be immediately evident but with time will explode, wrecking our lives. Examples of time bombs are an addiction to pornography, a deep insecurity that makes you look to women for affirmation, or bitterness and self-pity that looks to illicit sex as comfort.

Listen to these excellent quotes by a seasoned apostle: "Jimmy Swaggart, world renowned TV Evangelist, having been caught with a prostitute, blamed his fall and subsequent public disgrace on a secret addiction to pornography that had constantly dogged his path from his early teens. It had been a time bomb slowly ticking away for over 30 years."

"We tend either to be impressed or threatened by one another's outward success. Yet how many superstars, not to mention the rest of us ordinary mortals, have hidden time bombs ticking away waiting for Satan to detonate them?"

"The Christian world is fairly competent at training people academically and theologically but we are not so good at disciplining them in godly character. I have become overwhelmingly convinced that before a man is recognised and released into responsible leadership he needs to have been properly and carefully disciplined. This entails the discovering and defusing of time bombs in a man's character. It also means that character weaknesses are identified and dealt with." (Barney Coombs)

The world, the flesh & the devil

This is the terrible trio we all have to face in life! Some people may think they are safe – "I don't have any time-bombs ticking away" – but the fact is we don't need some unresolved issue from our past to shipwreck us! Any one of these three can do it.

"Not everyone who falls morally has some deep character fault or time bomb ticking away waiting to explode. No one is excluded from the magnetic pull of sin." (Barney Coombs)

The world is the enticing culture around us that is always promoting sensuousness, lust and illicit sex (1 Jn 2:16). The devil is our sworn enemy who constantly tempts us to sin (Gen 3:1-5). And our flesh is that fallen part of our nature, our sinful nature that we will carry to the grave (Gal 5:24, Col 3:5).

Once, when I was relating to a friend how a Christian leader we knew had fallen into adultery, he responded, "There's a devil out there!" To which I replied, "And a sinful nature inside!"

The point that was made was that we have enemies without and within – and the ones within are worse! No matter how far someone has gone up the mountain of God, or how great their history of holiness, they still carry their worst enemies within them – the evil desires of the flesh, the sinful tendencies that have to be put to death daily.

Regardless of who we are there is no room for complacency. We must be vigilant and guarded.

“Beware of no man more than yourself; we carry our worst enemies within us.” (Charles Haddon Spurgeon)

“There is a devil out there and a sinful nature inside!”

3 TYPES OF ADULTERY

There seem to be 3 types of adulterous affairs:

1. One night stand or fling while travelling – generally with someone you don't know well, who may not be a Christian and it is purely lustful. It is based on physical attraction and is entirely selfish. There is no long-term relationship.
2. With a co-worker – someone you spend a lot of time with and you gradually get too close until you cross lines and eventually fall into adultery.
3. With an 'ideal woman' – someone you may or may not work with who is just what you like: good looking, great figure, a strong Christian, you can talk with for hours, you have a lot in common and you really admire. There is 'chemistry' and a strong attraction in spirit, soul and body.

The last two types are more dangerous to the Christian because they may be subtle at first and 'sneak up' on the person. This is because there are other factors at work apart from just lust, such as friendship, admiration, shared visions and dreams, godly activities, etc.

These good factors may cause the man and woman involved, as well as their friends, to justify the growing relationship and be a cover for more sinister motives.

3 STAGES OF ADULTERY

“Once Christians, especially committed believers, believe they are immune, they easily deny that they are being tempted. The greater the denial, the easier the deception. Little compromises sneak up on them. They treat the snakes as if they were domesticated and no threat at all. In fact, they may not recognise danger until it's too late.” (Charles Mylander)

Many Christians do not realise how endangered they are. Their false sense of security and immunity lulls them into complacency instead of vigilance and guarding their hearts. This attitude is extremely dangerous!

From speaking to people who have fallen into sexual sin they often say: “I never thought this would happen!”

1 Cor 10:12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

The other big danger is they overestimate the resistance that the other person will give them. They think the other person is not interested in them or will draw the boundaries, and so they allow the relationship to grow into sin without applying any brakes.

There are **3 stages** that people pass through before they commit adultery:

1. Conversation stage

- In this stage the person really listens to them, or they to them. And there is lots of tender talk – and this is generally not happening in the marriage.
- There is emotional delight in one another and innocent touching.
- A good warning is: “If you are looking forward to the next hug you’re in trouble!”

2. Friendship stage

- In this stage the two are getting close but claim; “We’re just good friends”. They are living in denial and deception.
- This intimate friendship then grows to the very dangerous next stage.

3. Belonging stage

- The couple spend hidden time together – unknown to the spouse and covenant brothers.
- These secret times together are covered up by half truths and lies.

- The two exchange phone cards, notes, and gifts – as well as intimate talks and looks. The two become increasingly calls, SMS’s, e mails, engrossed in each other and are constantly on each other’s minds.
- The emotional pressure and physical temptation now feel overwhelming. Warning lights are flashing red. Alarm bells are ringing loudly. The couple (what they are now) may even be warned by friends about impending danger; but they don’t care. They are intoxicated with lust and infatuation.
- Very soon they begin touching inappropriately, and it quickly spirals out of control into sexual intercourse.
- Eventually the adulterers are found out – your sin will always find you out.
- Very often the adultery ends in heartache, shame and divorce. We read of the tragic end of the adulterer in Prov 5-7.

How to Lead a Prayer Meeting

by Nigel day-Lewis



(Acts 1:14) - Constantly joined together in prayer. (Acts 2:1) - Gathered in upper room. (Acts 2:42) - Devoted to prayer. Very strong word: Giving yourself completely to something. (Acts 4:11) - At prayer

Prayer is the engine room in a battle ship. "Bridge" is the eldership decision. "Crew" is the deacons. "Deck" is the Sunday meeting. "Engine" is the prayer that moves the church forward.

Jesus is the Head, Brain, and Decision-making. Elders are the nerves, taking those decisions to the body. Hands are practical. Feet are the evangelists. Prayer is the heart - pumps, keeps body alive.

WHY PRAY?

There is work to be done.

Spiritual and human realm

- Opposition and obstacles
- All we achieve is because of united prayer
- Win ground in the heavenly realm

- Many want to enjoy the fruit without putting in hard work (fruit without farming)

WHY PRAY OUT LOUD, TOGETHER?

1. Assistance of others praying around me

- It's easier to keep focused
- Raises my faith (others may have more than I have at that time)
- Stimulates my imagination (they think of things to pray for)
- They help me stay with it (stamina) (Matthew 18:19) - two or three agree - power of agreement
- Fosters a sense of family
- Comradeship
- Friendship is deepened when we fought together
- (Acts) - "*of one heart and one mind.*"
- (Phil) - "*be of one spirit and one purpose.*"

2. Best way to get people to own the church

- To massage the values and vision in
- Stimulates a greater ownership of the values
- When you've paid a price, you own it much more

3. No better way to get a heart for the nations

- Prayer opens the heart for the nations

4. When we pray we are writing the pages of people's futures

Prayer moves God to move men! Pray to effect world events. If prayer did not help, why would God ask us to pray?

- Makes things happen
- Prevents things from happening

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

People must leave feeling it was worth the effort - something was achieved. "*You paid the price to be there, now make the price pay!*"

We got a return for our investment.

1. Start meeting from day one

Start NOW!

2. Pray once a week together

- No less than once a week
- Find a time when **most** of the folk can get there
- Start and finish time
- Be flexible! Must not drag on!

3. Clarify it as a priority meeting

- Is more important than any other meeting
- Is a “whole church meeting”
- Welcome people back at prayer meeting, don’t wait till Sunday - sends a message
- “Your church is as large as your prayer meeting.” People who own your vision are there at your prayer meeting

4. Prepare well!

- Hold what you’ve prepared lightly!!
- Preparation is just as important as sermon preparation
- What does God want to do? Say?
- Maybe do some research, give details to help folk pray intelligently, reports, statistics
- One hour – talk bits not more than ten minutes out of sixty.
- “I love it when a plan comes together.” Its better that God’s plan dominates as the Holy Spirit invades. And if the plan does not come together as we planned.

5. Give clear leadership

- Q: What is it we’re praying for? “The World” is too general and vague!
- You can lose the point in too much explanation
- Can hear together what God is taking us into
- Make even that clear to the people.
- If the Holy Spirit is not giving direction, you step in and give direction.
- Encourage and commend the folk when they are praying well. Be honest though
- If not, there is no sense of value for effort.

6. You cannot pray for an hour without breaks, unless there is a unique anointing.

E.G. If praying for “the German church” give a two-minute background on each church, ending on a single main point. Pray for four minutes. Do not take it on for longer than the people have capacity for.

7. Use all styles of prayer

- Simultaneous
- Individual – while we agree with them
- Tongues
- Mother tongue

8. Different kinds of prayer

Intercession, Petition, Warfare, Prophetic declaration.

Worship (not all the time, not every week)

Prayer and warfare can take place through worship

9. At least 50% of issues prayed into should be outside of the congregation. (Acts 18) Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth. Feed back to the people. Read out e-mails and faxes of results.

10. Ensure people are praying with the essential ingredients of prayer, at all times; viz. with:

FAITH: Without faith it is impossible to please God

- If no faith, don’t bother
- Stir up faith
- Gather folk back, push pause to focus

PASSION: People must be involved, sincere and engaged.

PERSEVERANCE: DO NOT give up. DO NOT be afraid to pray over the same thing.

Reading A Meeting: Dudley Daniel



1. You need to know how to read a meeting. Practical aspects: is it too warm, too cold? Is the music too loud, too soft, too jarring, etc.? Can all see, hear, and participate if they want to? How do people with children feel? How do those who are older and can't cope with screaming kids feel?
2. The meeting itself. Discern what God is trying to do. Is the worship team hitting it or missing it? If they are missing it, turn the meeting by going to the microphone and leading the meeting into what God is doing.
3. Is there life in what is happening? Has the anointing lifted?
4. Does what has taken place, or is presently happening, need explanation?
5. Are the people able to respond to what God is saying / doing? Don't just rush on to the next thing.
6. Does what the next person says / does cut across what is happening? If it does, gently bring it back on course.
7. Is someone trying to force something to happen – the energy of the flesh? It will hurt someone, if not everyone. If we don't correct as soon as something happens - that is not God – we abuse the

people. People release something over the church, break it in prayer.

8. Don't introduce apostolic gifts as guest speakers.

PH-B notes

1. Learn to discern when the meeting / worship is going on too long. We abuse the folk when we go on and on and on.
2. Remember every meeting has a purpose - which is, primarily, about bringing God glory!! Don't let people draw the focus on to them.
3. Set the tone for the meeting - e.g. call them to worship, read a Psalm, and focus their attention on why we are there and what is expected of them.
4. Create a climate of immediate obedience to prophetic words etc. Let the folk respond right there and then.

INDISPENSIBLE KEYS TO A GREAT MEETING

1. **The leader comes prepared:** prayed up, well on time, expectant, excited, ready for all the elements of the meeting (knows what needs to be in notices, which elders are away – people need to know where they are, the aims of that particular meeting). The devil will try to embroil you in family drama before the meeting – be on your guard.
2. **The leader knows who is leading** the prayer, leading the music and who is preaching. Check with pre-meeting prayer leader as to what God said / the flow, pictures etc that might be relevant for the meeting.
3. **Start excellently:**
 - a. Gather the folk ON TIME (until there is better discipline, may need to use a song to get the folk to be quiet and ready),
 - b. **Set the tone** (God exultant, transcendent, He is the reason we

gather) – perhaps use an exultant Psalm like Psalm 95 – remind folk that we are expectant, privileged to be here, this is a great thing we are doing, this is a great congregation, positive, happy, functional family) – all done in a light, positive, joyful atmosphere (which leader sets: smile!!!! Relax!!!!). Check with the muso that the right song is sung first – i.e. it is a God-glorifying tone,

c. **Welcome the visitors** - Don't ask them to put their hands up. Our folk need to be reminded to be good hosts of the community - so its best to say, "*in a few seconds excited applause is going to break out for the guests – so if you are here for the first time we want to welcome you – lets welcome them Church*". Applause etc. Then tell them re the welcome pack and complimentary snack after the meeting.

4. **Reading the meeting:** this is an eldership function, which means guys should *liase closely* with an elder (actually stand physically near to be able to consult – and be willing to follow their lead if necessary.) See notes on *Reading a Meeting*. Give leadership – don't leave everyone at the mercy of a never-ending muso, or a highly charged prayer / prophesier. Don't let anyone dominate. Discern when it is time to preach and cut the music – and cut it decently (not abruptly and clinically) – lead out from worship climate with prayer. Remember you as meeting leader cannot "lose yourself in worship" as you have to keep an eye on the folk (are they with us?), the Lord (what is He saying?) and the dynamics of what you feel needs to be achieved (where is this meeting going?).

While worship is crucial, people grow and are transformed through the preaching of the Word.

5. **Other:**

a. **Tithes and Offerings** - don't be too casual here as you pass on the

unBiblical message that money is a casual thing and a necessary evil in our meeting, which must be hurried. Encourage the folk to give righteously - even share a bit to educate them - use someone's positive testimony (never ask someone who you know does not tithe),

b. Always **explain the absence of an elder** if indeed away,

c. **Honour folk** appropriately - e.g. a muso leads well, someone has done something well, welcome folk visiting who were once part of the church, family members of our folk e.g. Folk visiting to watch their grandchild dedicated etc. Condolences to those who have lost family etc - have to develop an eye for sheep needs / things,

d. Keep the **notices** to a minimal and read them with some conviction. Don't feel railroaded to have to share notices that folk bombard you with right there and then - they should have brought them in the week. Everyone has their pet cause and cannot be accommodated,

e. **Momentum** - without it a meeting is hard to lead / be in. If the right tone has been set by the meeting leader, the muso's have led properly, and the folk have worshiped, there will be momentum - see that it is maintained,

f. **Don't let the meeting go on for ever** - even good things must come to an end.