

The Need For Christian Leadership

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Introduction: Accidents happen, but some people actually practice accidental living. They get up each day and do what they want to do, they make their own plans, and accomplish their own goals, NEVER once considering that if they were in sync with God's plan for their life....they could live a life of meaning.

I'll give you a good example....In October 2012 the **Carnival Cruise** line pulled out of Mobile, leaving the city with a ton of debt. That was until the **Triumph** disaster in February. We were blessed to help out and the ship was pulled by the coast guard to our port. It was a blessing in disguise for the city, that was until April 3, when some storms came up and it collided with a guard shack next to the dock and the men were cast into the sea. Both died. Each step along the way there have been accidents. Problems. Crisis. Is it the boats fault? Who is to blame? Humans? No matter how hard we try, we keep finding ourselves in messes.

One person said, "Leadership should be defined as influence." Think about that for a moment. If you don't like the idea of being a leader... that is fine.... We can redefine it.... What we really need are **INFLUENCERS**. Are you willing to be an influencer? That is exactly what we are talking about.

Discussion:

I. TO LEAD....WE SHOULD CONSIDER GODLY EXAMPLES.

In order to get a better perspective on this concept look to Nehemiah.... *Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lays waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach."* - Nehemiah 2:17

What was Nehemiah's major concern? The buildings? The walls? The temple? Their influence? Think about it....why was he so passionate about this work?
HE DID NOT WANT TO BE A REPROACH TO HIS GOD!
Their lack of interest in the work of God was a shame....and other people saw it.

Nehemiah knew that **Whether it's intentional or accidental, you are leading.** Ever notice the people behind you when you run a stop light? What happens sometimes? I've watched kids pretending to smoke popsicle sticks. Where did they learn that? When people use foul language or use harsh statements, where did they learn them?

We are all leaders.... Whether we want to be or not.... So question: **Where are you leading?**

II. TO LEAD....WE MUST CONSIDER OUR RELATIONSHIP AND WALK WITH GOD.

Something grabs ahold of us from time to time and we feel compelled to do something. We decide to vote. We decided to go to the meeting. We decide to confront someone. We decide to step out on faith and try something new. Nehemiah completely understood this! Right after he found out that the opportunity to return to Jerusalem would present itself, guess what he did?

“When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Then I said: “Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel.” - Nehemiah 1:4-6

He prayed! If you want to be a good leader, or person of influence...You need to work on your personal prayer life (Prayer Warrior series). The best leaders are those who lead on their knees.

If there is one thing we know about us humans it is that... **Where we lead, others will follow.**

I believe this is why we are compared to **sheep** so often (**Psalm 23, I Peter 5**). What is the biblical term for the elders of the church? Shepherds? We are called the flock of God!

When you make a decision, don't be surprised if someone is following close behind. This is really the hardest part about Christian living. We all make mistakes, right? (GSCOC family) We have got to learn to GROW together. Walk closer to God. Pray together. Study together.

III. TO LEAD.... WE MUST ACT PURPOSEFULLY IN THE WILL OF GOD.

This is the exact opposite of accidental living. PURPOSE filled living. Several years ago Rick Warren made millions on his books Purpose-Driven Church and Purpose-Driven Life. It got many people thinking of Purpose-Driven things.... I even did a series on child rearing around that time entitled Purpose-Driven Parenting. We couldn't help it. The term just sounds cool. Why was it so popular? Because he was teaching what Jesus teaches....

We have to start with the end in mind. Isn't that what Paul taught? Peter? This is what Nehemiah does in chapter 1...and it carries him through to chapter 13. He knew that God would be with him and bless him, if he did it God's way. He had to act according to the will of God... in harmony, unity with the Lord. And, he had to get others to see the necessity.

When we are living a life on purpose **we can't forget about the enemy, but we can ignore the opposition.** Look into chapter **Nehemiah 4:1-15**...Before we read it let me set the tone....The Jews divide the tasks up among themselves and start working! While he implements this great work he has opposition within and without. I love to study this book, and see these things, because they are telling of even our society today. We will have this same opposition.

Opposition Within - The original temple work included 80K quarrymen, 70K porters, and 30K Israelites to cut and transport the wood, not including the other skilled craftsmen (**I Kings 5:15-38**). Could that even compare to this effort? NOT LIKE THE ORIGINAL

WHAT WE KNOW - The gold in the first temple work was estimated to be worth \$760 billion and the silver was estimated to be worth \$384 billion. The payment from the sale of the Jewish property that Haman promised to make to the government was \$3,840,000,000. Wow! This posed a problem....the older, more traditional people were frustrated that things would not be like they once were. They didn't like change! They couldn't be patient! READ Haggai and Zechariah to see how God responds.

Opposition Without - Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem – we need to remember that our GREATEST enemy is Satan! (GSCOC summer series on Villains of the Bible). The people in our society are NOT our enemies! If they start to harass you... or frustrate you....ignore them.

It's not enough to just have good intentions. We must act purposefully. Sometimes it can be the wrong time to do the right thing... like confronting a person in public about a private matter. I love how Paul says SPEAK THE TRUTH..... IN what? LOVE (**Ephesians 4:15**). I wonder why he through that in there? I wonder why when Paul talks about confronting people he says go in a spirit of what (**Galatians 6:1-2**). Remember also....

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” - James 1:22. We need to be doers of the word, not hearers only (another translation says). What do we call a person who says one thing and does something else? HYPOCRITE!

Finally, I want to share with you four things I learned from a preacher friend of mine about leading in an intentional way: Practices of an Intentional Leader

- Number 1: MODEL THE WAY.
- Number 2: INSPIRE A SHARED VISION.
- Number 3: CHALLENGE THE PROCESS.
- Number 4: ENCOURAGE THE HEART.

I share these with you because they illustrate genuine Christian leadership.

Conclusion: I was recently asked to speak on a lectureship in Mobile directed toward youth, and also for a family retreat. Both on Nehemiah and leadership. I think people are leaning this way, right now, and we need to ride the wave... We need to build the wall of leadership! We need that wall in our homes, in our schools, in our workplaces, and especially in the church!

The church doesn't need a wall of defense, because God is our defender.....

The church doesn't need a wall of safety or protection, because our God is a strong & mighty tower....

The church doesn't need a wall of division, because we are divided enough because of opinions and traditions and ego-driven people.....

Instead, what the church DOES need a wall made up of strong, godly, spirit-filled leaders. Think about why people were drawn to Jesus.... Shouldn't we want to be like Him, so that they can see Him in us! That is the goal of Christianity. This is why we call ourselves Christians!

Each of us have to make a decision to take the lead even if no one else will follow. Maybe God has placed you in the kingdom for "such a time as this" for you to lead. God has placed you in your home for a reason. He has placed you in your schools and workplaces for a reason. God is a great designer and planner... honestly nothing happens by accident! So we shouldn't like an accidental life. We need to live life on purpose....in the will of God!

Will you become a leader? Let's learn from the leadership principles of Nehemiah and move forward. May God bless us and our work in His kingdom!!! Do you need to come to the Good Shepherd? Do you need to surrender to His will?