

# CHAPTER 6

If God has called you to be really like Jesus He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility, and put upon you such demands of obedience, that you will not be able to follow other people, or measure yourself by other Christians, and in many ways He will seem to let other good people do things which He will not let you do.

Other Christians and ministers who seem very religious and useful may push themselves, pull wires, and work schemes to carry out their plans, but you cannot do it, and if you attempt it, you will meet with such failure and rebuke from the Lord as to make you sorely penitent.

Others may boast of themselves, of their work, of their successes, of their writings, but the Holy Spirit will not allow you to do any such thing, and if you begin it, He will lead you into some deep mortification that will make you despise yourself and all your good works.

Others may be allowed to succeed in making money, or may have a legacy left to them, but it is likely God will keep you poor, because He wants you to have something far better than gold, namely, a helpless dependence upon Him, that He may have the privilege of supplying your needs day by day out of an unseen treasury.

The Lord may let others be honored and put forward, and keep you hidden in obscurity, because He wants to produce some choice fragrant fruit for His coming glory, which can only be produced in the shade. He may let others be great, but keep you small. He may let others do a work for Him and get the credit for it, but He will make you work and toil on without knowing how much you are doing; and then to make your work still more precious He may let others get credit for the work you have done, and thus make your reward ten times greater when Jesus comes.

The Holy Spirit will put a strict watch over you, with a jealous love, and will rebuke you for little words and feelings, or for wasting your time, which other Christians never feel distressed over. So make up your mind that God is an infinite Sovereign, and has the right to do as He pleases with His own. He may not explain to you a thousand things which puzzle your reason in His dealings with you, but if you absolutely sell yourself to be His love slave, He will wrap you up in a jealous love, and bestow upon you many blessings which come only to those who are in the inner circle.

Settle it forever, then, that you are to deal directly with the Holy Spirit, and that He is to have the privilege of trying your tongue, or chaining your hand, or closing your eyes, in ways that He does not seem to use with others. Now, when you are so possessed with the Living God that you are, in your secret heart pleased and delighted over this peculiar, personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of the Holy Spirit over your life, you will have entered the vestibule of Heaven.

## **6. THE ELDER'S EXAMPLE**

### **"THE CHIEF SHEPHERD"**

An Elder must be a man of God; and yet he is a man only. "The best of men are men at best," said Alistair Begg, who correctly understood that a spiritual leader is in a sinner process, like everyone else. He is more accountable to the same standard, but he continually falls short. He does not allow unrepentant sin to dominate his life, but he daily battles sin. He is a new creature in Christ and exemplary in his walk, yet at best when compared to God's holiness, he is still, on his own, "**wretched**" (**Romans 7:24**). And yet, the church is to follow him as he follows Christ (**1 Corinthians 11:1**). This means that the man who is the example for the church is himself following another example, the ultimate example: Him who is called "The Chief Elder" – the Lord Jesus Christ (**1 Peter 5:4**).

The greatest leader is God Himself. He uses His influence and authority to guide us into His perfect will. He is the perfect example not only of character, but also of leadership. Notice what the following verses say about how He guides us into His will, and for what purpose:

- **Psalm 5:8**
  
- **Psalm 23:2**
  
- **Psalm 25:5**
  
- **Psalm 25:9**
  
- **Psalm 139:8-10**
  
- **Psalm 139:23-24**
  
- **Psalm 143:10**
  
- **Matthew 6:13**
  
- **2 Corinthians 2:14**

➤ **Psalm 31:3**

The greatest lessons in leadership in Scripture come when we study the life and ministry of God-incarnate, whose attitudes, actions, wisdom, influence, demeanor, and decision-making was flawless in the face of all kinds of reactions from people: unbelieving and believing, shallow and deep, critical and supportive, fickle and faithful. He perfectly accomplished all that the Father gave Him to do (**John 17:4**), and always in a way that was pleasing to His Father (**John 8:29**). He is the Elder's example. *In the text of John 10 provided below, circle the positive aspects of Christlike leadership and underline the negative qualities of selfish leadership*

<sup>1</sup>“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup>“But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup>“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>“When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>“A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup>This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. <sup>7</sup>So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup>“All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup>“I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup>“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly. <sup>11</sup>“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>“He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. <sup>13</sup>“*He flees* because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. <sup>14</sup>“I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, <sup>15</sup>even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. <sup>18</sup>“No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.... <sup>27</sup>“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; <sup>28</sup>and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup>“My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.”

The summation of Jesus' example of leadership is that of a Good Shepherd and most dominantly focuses on the attitudes with which He instructed His disciples and illustrated with His life. This study will emphasize the aspects of love and humility.

## 1. LOVE

A godly leader will lead like God and have the same character qualities as God. In fact, what makes our influence so compelling is not that people see something great in *us*, but that they see *Someone* great working through us – God! A true leader then is someone who strives to be like God, and the Bible says, among other attributes, “**God is love.**”

- A. A leader who does not love is not like God and not worth following. Why?
- B. What is love, Biblically defined?
- C. What Scripture verses inform your understanding of love?
- D. How does this definition of love contradict the world's definition?
- E. How does Jesus say that the world loves in **Matthew 5:43-47**?
- F. What does Jesus say in **John 15:13** about the greatest evidence of true love?
- G. What happens if love is missing from leadership?
- H. In **John 13**, we catch a glimpse of Jesus leading His 12 disciples, the night before He “**lays down His life for His friends.**”
- I. What does **John 13:1** say about Jesus' attitude towards His followers?
- J. How did Jesus demonstrate this attitude towards his disciples in v. 4-5?
- K. What is so strange about this? Whose role was this? What does this say about the evidence of love?

- L. Why did Jesus have to do this? Why didn't the disciples think of this first?
- M. What does this say about the nature of leadership? Did anyone have any doubt as to who the leader was in that room?
- N. In **v. 4-11**, Jesus uses this situation as an object lesson for the disciples – what is His point?
- O. What does Jesus hope to convey to His disciples according to **v. 12-17**?
- P. According to **v. 11**, there was one disciple in the room whose foot washing meant something a little different – who was it? What does this say about the nature of love?
- Q. What does **Romans 5:5** say about your ability to love like this?

## **2. HUMILITY**

Leadership is often thought of in terms of a person's greatness. The question that everyone seems to be trying to answer is: What makes a great leader? How can a person be truly great? God's answer is shockingly different than the world's answer. In fact, it is an answer that the world would consider foolish and reject outright. It is this: *the path to true greatness is the path of humiliation, the key that unlocks leadership is submission, and the way to be first is to be last*. This paradox is what Jesus taught to His disciples in a discussion about leadership in **Mark 10:32-45**.

- A. Where are Jesus and His disciples headed in the story, based on **v. 32-34**?
- B. What is Jesus' attitude in **v. 32**? How do those who observe Jesus' resolve react?
- C. Why do you think that Jesus was so specific and graphic in **v. 33-34** with His description of what will happen to Him at the end of this Passion Week?
- D. With as detailed and private as Jesus was towards the 12, why did His disciples not catch His meaning, based on **v. 35-37**? What were they asking for? What does this teach about the nature of the disciples?

- E. What detail does **Matthew 20:20** include that Mark does not? What advantage were they trying to gain?
- F. How did the other 10 react, according to **v. 41**?
- G. How did Peter respond on Thursday night before the cross, when Jesus spoke of His death and Peter's denial (**Mark 14:27-31**)? What hindered Peter?
- H. How did the cross not fit into their understanding of Jesus as a Leader?
- I. In both of these examples, pride caused the disciples to miss the point of the cross. What does this mean about the place of the cross in the life of a leader, especially based on Jesus' words in **v. 45**?
- J. What lesson does the example of Jesus on the cross teach about leadership (**v. 42-44**)?

**YOU CANNOT COMMUNICATE BOTH THAT YOU ARE A GREAT LEADER  
AND GOD IS A GREAT SAVIOR.**

- K. Evaluate the above statement. Is it true? Why or why not?
- L. What are some indications of pride and humility, which will determine the greatness of your leadership?
- M. If you get this right, what does Jesus say in **John 14:12** will be the legacy of your leadership?

### **CONCLUSION**

When it is all said and done, the legacy of a person's life and leadership depends entirely on his ability to be like Christ, which only comes through the power of the Holy Spirit, motivated by the glory of the Father. Jesus' leadership pattern collides with the one the world offers and the one that usually rises from our natural, fleshly tendency. A full analysis of the life and ministry of Christ is well beyond the scope of this study, but is recommended as immensely useful to the leader who is interested in life-long learning.