

2. Understanding Why Worldly Leaders Are Driven by Fear

As we look at leaders in the world, we see that most of them have become very driven people. As a result, they in turn drive others instead of providing real leadership. In order to understand how to be an effective godly leader, we first need to understand why that is not true of most leaders.

That fear is very obvious with some leaders. A good example is Herod. In Matthew 2:1-3, we read, “Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.’ When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” In verse 16, we see the result of that fear caused Herod to kill innocent babies to try to protect his power.

We see a similar example of fear in Acts 13:44-45. Those verses say, “On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.” Here, we see that the Jewish religious leaders in Antioch of Pisidia were fearful that they would lose their power that they were exercising through religion.

We could show many other examples of worldly leaders who were driven by fear from Pharaoh to Pilate. However, the focus of our topic today is, “Why are worldly leaders driven by fear?” In order to understand why leaders are driven by fear, we need to go back to the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3:10, Adam answered God, “So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” Adam had sinned and because of sin, the inner motivation for his life became fear, guilt, and shame.

1 John 4:18 tells us that only one thing can reverse that fear. That verse says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, Paul said, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” As we compare these verses, we see that only the love of Christ can change our motivation from fear to love. That is why all worldly leaders are driven by fear. Some try to hide that fear, while with others it is very obvious.

A worldly leader who is motivated by fear is actually driven by that fear. When we are driven by fear, we will drive others instead of leading them. This fear often drives a leader to find something in which he can take root. In the New Testament we are given four roots. Two of these roots are positive and two of these are negative.

The longer a worldly leader exercises leadership, the more likely it is that one of these negative roots will develop in his life. Hebrews 12:15 says, “Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.” Here, we see that one of the negative roots that may develop is bitterness. This verse

tells us that this root will cause at least two problems:

- Bitterness will cause trouble.
- Bitterness will cause many to become defiled.

We notice that bitterness has both an inner result and an outer result. The word that is translated “trouble” means, *to excite, disturb, trouble, or annoy*. Here, we see what bitterness does within every person who becomes bitter. Things that happen in life begin to disturb and annoy a bitter person. As a result, that person cannot enjoy inner peace, whether that person is a leader or not.

Every person also has an influence on others. Those who are in positions of leadership have an influence on many more people. However, this verse tells us that the bitter person will cause many others to become defiled. Here, we see the outward result of a person becoming bitter. A bitter leader will cause large numbers of people to be defiled. As a result, it is very obvious that a leader who becomes bitter, because of the fear in his life, will have a very negative impact on others.

That brings us to the second negative root in the New Testament. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 says, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Notice that a person does not have to be rich to have a root of the love of money. Instead, the verse says that they desire to be rich. Here, we see that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. That root will:

- Cause many to desire to be rich
- Cause many to fall into temptation
- Cause many to be caught in a trap
- Cause many to turn to foolish lusts
- Cause many to turn to harmful lusts
- Cause many to turn to things that destroy them
- Cause many to turn to things that bring eternal destruction
- Cause some to stray from the faith because of greediness
- Cause some to torture their soul with sorrows

The more people a person is leading, the more destructive this root will be. Those who desire to be rich begin to use and destroy other people to get what they want. As a result, this root is just as destructive or even more destructive than the root of bitterness. Political leaders, business leaders, and all other leaders have a great negative influence on the lives of others when a root of love for money takes root in their lives.

As we look back at the wars that have happened throughout history, we see that one or both of the roots mentioned above usually drove the leaders who caused those wars. They were driven by fear, and they stirred up this fear in others. Often this fear was motivated by bitterness or the love of money that had taken root in the lives of those leaders.

Although this helps us to see why worldly leaders are driven by fear, it also helps us to realize that

fear can be replaced by the love of Christ. As 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” One of the things we want to help every new Christian do is begin to move from fear to love.

1 John 4:17 tells us, “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.” One of the first things we want to help the new Christian to learn is that he no longer needs to fear the day of judgment. As the new Christian begins to understand the love of Christ, he will begin to realize that he has no reason to fear that day.

Then, 1 John 4:19-21 tells us, “We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.” Here, we see that love is our response to the fact that God loves us. That is why we need to help all new Christians realize how much God loves them.

As new Christians learn how much God loves them, they will begin to be led by the love of God rather than driven by the fear that is the result of sin. As they learn to be led by love, it will begin to have a powerful impact in their lives. First, they will begin to have greater inner peace. Second, they will begin to minister to their families in love rather than fear and that will begin to have an impact on their families. Later, it will be a basic foundation for helping them develop as leaders who are led.

The Lord calls us to lead others to grow in their understanding of how love will cast out their fear. As they grow in that understanding their lives will be changing from the inside. However, that love will begin to show itself in their contacts with others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help others begin to move from fear to love.