

8. Developing Ministry Skills Through Joint Ministry – Part 2

In our last topic, we saw that Christ did a variety of things in joint ministry with the disciples to develop their ministry skills. Today, we are going to learn about one of the key ministry skills that Christ worked to develop in the twelve. That is the ministry skill of being a servant leader. This is one ministry skill that many spiritual leaders never learn. As a result, they greatly limit their ministry. Christ not only helped the disciples learn to become servant leaders by teaching, but especially by example. In order to help developing leaders learn to become servant leaders, we must both teach and demonstrate, by our example, what it means to be servant leaders.

Mark 10:42-45 says, “But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’” In these verses, we see that:

- ♦ the style of worldly leadership is to lord it over others
- ♦ the style of worldly leadership is to exercise authority over others
- ♦ Godly leadership is not to have these attitudes
- ♦ Godly leadership becomes great by becoming a servant
- ♦ Godly leadership becomes great by becoming a bondsman to all
- ♦ Godly leadership was modeled by Christ
- ♦ Godly leaders do not expect to be served
- ♦ Godly leaders look for opportunities to serve others
- ♦ Godly leaders follow the example of Christ by giving their lives to minister to others

First, we see that the style of worldly leadership is to lord it over others. One who tries to lord it over others is one who works to bring others under his or her power. Such a person wants to gain and exercise power over others. In Acts 19:16, we see that the word is translated “overcame” when a demon possessed man overcame the seven sons of Sceva. It speaks of one who wants control over others. In 1 Peter 5:3, this is specifically forbidden for spiritual leaders. That verse says, “...nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” Here, we see that spiritual leaders lead by example rather than lordship.

Second, we see that the style of worldly leadership is to exercise authority over others. This speaks of leadership that tries to exercise authority over and dominate others. 3 John 9-10 says, “I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.” A person who exercises authority is one who wants to be the boss. We see that Diotrephes shows us that such leaders do try to gain control in the church.

Paul told the elders in Ephesus the same thing in Acts 20:30. That verse says, “Also from among

yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” In Acts 20:28-31, we see that Paul warned that leaders seeking personal power in the church are just as dangerous as false teachers in the church. The most common cause of church splits is someone trying to exercise this kind of power in the church.

Third, we see that godly leadership is not to have these two attitudes mentioned above. When we see these attitudes in the church, the person showing these attitudes is trying to exercise worldly leadership in the church rather than godly leadership. Such a leader is driven by fear instead of being led by the love of Christ. John 10:12-13 says that such a leader is a hireling, instead of a shepherd, and does not care for the sheep.

Fourth, we see that a godly leader becomes great by becoming a servant. The word that is translated “servant” speaks of one who carries out the commands of another. A servant leader is one who carries out the commands of Christ. All of the commands of Christ are summarized in just three commands:

1. The first commandment

Matthew 22:37 – “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

2. The second commandment

Matthew 22:39 – “And *the* second *is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” In Luke 10:26-37, Christ said that our neighbor is any person in need – either physical or spiritual need.

3. The third commandment

John 13:34 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” Here, we see that a godly leader models the love of Christ, by his example, so that others are shown how to love others as Christ loves them.

Fifth, a godly leader becomes great by becoming the bondservant of all. A bondservant was one who gave himself up to the will of another to the disregard of his own interests. This means that the greatest desire of a godly leader is to be used by Christ to extend the cause of Christ. Such a leader will do whatever is necessary to serve each person and help each person become more like Christ.

Sixth, a godly leader will follow the example of Christ. Paul said, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.” Paul did not just say imitate me. Paul said to imitate him because he was imitating Christ. The greatest desire of a godly leader is to become more like Christ. Paul said, in Philippians 3:10, “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” We will only see that happen in the lives of developing spiritual leaders as they spend time with us and see that we have the same attitude as Paul.

Seventh, a godly leader does not expect to be served. We do not take developing leaders with us as we minister so that they can serve us. Instead, we take developing leaders with us so that we can serve them. In fact, our first priority when we minister is to show those that we take with us how to minister in that type of situation. When Christ preached to the multitudes, His first priority

was not the multitudes. His first priority was the disciples that He took with Him. Mark 4:34 says, “But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.” The greatest concern of Christ was the disciples He was serving and training by His example.

Eighth, a godly leader looks for opportunities to serve others. As the disciples traveled with Christ, they saw that He was always ready to serve others. Even while Christ took the disciples aside so they could get some rest, Christ taught and fed the five thousand when they came to Him in Mark 6:30-44. Christ both showed and got the disciples involved in serving others on that particular occasion. That is why the ministry skill of being a servant leader can only be taught by example. We model servant leadership for those that we take with us as we minister.

Ninth, godly leaders follow the example of Christ by giving their lives to serve others. As you can see, this is first an attitude of heart. Once a developing leader has this attitude of heart, we can help that person develop the skills that go along with serving others by showing them how to help others become more like Christ. This will be the key determining factor of whether we just develop leaders or whether we develop spiritual leaders who are able to develop reproducing spiritual leaders. Until the person has this attitude of heart, that person will develop worldly leaders instead of godly leaders.

As you can see, a godly servant leader is very different from a worldly leader. Godly servant leaders will usually only develop as they see our example of godly servant leadership. That is why we make the choice to spend as much time as possible in a variety of different situations with developing leaders so that they can see our example in many different situations. Just as Christ chose to invest His time in the future leadership of the church, we make the choice to invest our time in the next generation of spiritual leadership.

The Lord has given us a great privilege to have the opportunity to develop godly spiritual leaders. What we are, those developing leaders will become. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing spiritual leaders develop as servant leaders.