

## 11. A Servant Who Leads Focuses on Biblical Priorities

A servant who leads is one who leads others by his or her example. Christ gave us an example throughout His life and ministry. One of the areas Christ gave us an example to follow was in His priorities. If we are going to have an eternal impact on others, we must have the same priorities for our lives that Christ had for His life.

Throughout His ministry, Christ made it clear that there were certain priorities in His life. In Mark 1:35, we read, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” In this verse, we see that Christ showed us that our first priority is to continue to build our relationship with God. Christ showed us four things about this priority. We see that:

- the first priority of Christ was fellowship with the Father
- the first priority of Christ was to begin the day with fellowship
- the first priority of Christ was to be alone with the Father
- the first priority of Christ was to spend time in prayer

By looking at this verse, we see that our first priority is to grow in our understanding of the love of God for us and grow in our understanding of what it means to love God.

First, we will only be effective servants who lead if we continue to build our fellowship with the Father. Here, we see that fellowship with the Father only develops as we spend time with the Father and with Christ. 1 John 1:3-4 says, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.” John realized that he must have fellowship with both the Father and with Christ if he was going to be an effective servant for Christ.

1 John 1:5-7 tells us what is necessary to have genuine fellowship with God, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” We cannot have fellowship with the Father and the Son if we are walking in darkness. We will have fellowship as we walk in the light. This reminds us that fellowship is not something that we just experience during times of prayer. Instead fellowship should be our experience throughout the day because we are walking in the light.

Second, Christ gave us the example that fellowship begins as soon as we are awake. Once we wake up, we can begin our fellowship with the Lord before we even get out of bed. If we wake up in the middle of the night, we can use that time to enjoy fellowship with the Lord. Fellowship is sharing our lives with Christ. That happens as we talk to Him in prayer and let Him talk to us as we meditate on His Word. We can do both of those things throughout the day, including while we are still lying in bed.

Third, Christ gave us the example that fellowship includes taking time to be alone with God. We need to be enjoying fellowship with God while we are around other people. However, we also need to take time to just be alone with God as we meditate and pray without any interruptions. It is often during these times that we begin to understand, in a greater way, the greatness of the love God has for us.

Fourth, Christ showed us that an important part of fellowship is spending time with God in prayer. There is a great difference between saying prayers and praying. Saying prayers is repeating prayers that may have little or nothing to do with your life. True prayer is:

- \* Talking to God about the things that are important to you in your personal relationship with God (fellowship)
- \* Talking to God, and seeking His, will about the things that He wants us to do (ministry)

Christ showed us that our first priority is to love God. Then, Christ showed us that our second priority is to love one another, as He has loved us. In John 13:34-35, we read, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Christ had spent more than three years with the disciples. During this time, they continually saw how much Christ loved them. It was only after they had seen how Christ loved them that He could give them this new commandment. In these verses, we see three things. We see that:

- we are to love one another as Christ has loved us
- we cause others to recognize that we are disciples of Christ because we love one another
- we show this love for one another by our actions

In order to carry out this second priority, we must love one another in the strength Christ provides, not in our own strength. We cannot love others as Christ loves us in our own strength. We will only love others as Christ loves us as we yield to the Holy Spirit,<sup>0</sup> so that the power of the Holy Spirit is working in us. That is what allows the love of Christ to flow through us.

As we study the life of Christ, we also see that Christ showed us a third priority for our lives. In addition to loving God and loving one another, we are also to love the world around us. In Matthew 9:36-38 we read, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” If we love the world around us, as Christ loves them, we will:

- ♦ see the multitudes as Christ saw them
- ♦ have the compassion of Christ for them
- ♦ see that the harvest around us is abundant
- ♦ recognize that there is a shortage of workers to tell these people about Christ
- ♦ pray the Lord of the harvest and ask Him to send forth laborers into His harvest
- ♦ respond by going out into the harvest field and sharing the Gospel – Matthew 10:1-8

Here, we see that true love is demonstrated by obedience to Christ that results in us becoming

partners with Christ in reaching out to the multitudes. Isaiah 6:8-9a gives us an example of how Isaiah responded to God. Those verses say, “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here *am* I! Send me.’ And He said, ‘Go, and tell this people.’” Isaiah did not say, Here am I, send my sister or brother. Instead, he responded in love by immediately making himself available to go and speak for God. That is what the Lord calls us to do also.

As you seek to lead others, you will only lead them effectively as you lead with the same three priorities Christ demonstrated in His ministry. That is why to be an effective servant who leads, our priorities must be to:

1. love God with our whole heart
2. love one another as Christ loves us
3. love the world as Christ loves the world

As we have these things as our priorities, we will be effective servants who lead by love. May the Lord richly bless you, as you make these the three priorities of your life.