

Leadership

by Van Knolton

A couple of weeks ago, before the Coronavirus COVID-19 kept us from going out to dinner, I was at a local restaurant. I was wearing a sweatshirt from my attendance at the U.S. Air Force Air War College. A man stopped, looked at me and said, "Thank you for your service." That's become fairly typical in this day. My answer to him though was, "Thank you, my pleasure to serve." That interaction reminded me I owe a debt to a brother of mine who is working to help teach and instill leadership in young men of the Church.

Let's begin by looking at *leadership* in the context of U.S. Army doctrine and apply it to leading in the Church. Leadership is defined in doctrine as "the process of influencing people by providing **purpose, direction, and motivation**, to accomplish the mission and improve the organization. Leadership of God's people is no different. Leaders first and foremost **serve** the organization and people in that organization. They serve to provide purpose, direction, and motivation **"to accomplish the mission and improve the organization."**

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. (Ecc 12:13 NKJV) In this verse Solomon give Christians the result of his wisdom, study, and practice. Our purpose as created beings are to look to God in awe and reverence and keep his commandments and tell others. Solomon didn't hold the wisdom to himself, rather he shared it with his son and all who would read his writings.

Paul tells us to, *"walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* (Eph 4:1 NKJV) How does one follow the directions of someone heading the wrong way? Is it easier to tell someone where to go if you are headed to the same place? Remember Solomon's conclusion on purpose, we can't walk worthy unless we understand the calling and walk in the way that achieves the purpose.

"Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Tim 4:8 NKJV) Paul tells Timothy, he has kept the purpose and direction, and this is his motivation that not only is he awarded a crown of life but all who have done as he. Having kept the faith, Paul knew he would be preserved for the heavenly kingdom and everlasting life.

One could argue that each of these statements provide purpose, direction, and motivation just in different words. Solomon and Paul, one a king and two preachers, both leaders who served their people in love, both participated with and guided others, served our ultimate leader who gave us purpose *"...nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."* (Matt 26:39 NKJV) In this we see that to lead is also to follow, to submit to authority, to lead in the purpose and direction we are given to achieve our mission as Christians.

We all need to remember not all leaders stand in the front of the auditorium, some sit beside us, some stand in the back organizing the service, some teach in our Bible studies. We all influence others with our actions. Informal leadership exist in the organization however, it must reflect the leadership of the legitimate authority. Our direction cannot be different from that of God, *"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other."* (Luke 16:13 NKJV) Therefore we must be united in our faith for the common purpose that like Paul, we might all win the crown of life. Lead to Serve, Serve to Lead.

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