

LESSON 7

THE COST OF LEADERSHIP

“Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” (Mark 10:38)

1. No one need aspire to leadership in the work of God who is no prepared to pay a price greater than his contemporaries and colleagues are willing to pay. True spiritual leadership always exacts a heavy toll on the whole man and his relationships, and the more effective the leadership is, the higher price to be paid.

2. This fact was taught by the Lord when He indicated we can not save others and ourself as the same time. Spiritual power in Spiritual leadership is the outpouring of spiritual life, our life. And those who desire to BECOME a leader may pay the price, and seek the power from God.

3. The cost, the price the true spiritual leader are many:

A. Self-Sacrifice. Self-sacrifice is part of the price that must be paid daily, A cross stands in the way of spiritual leadership, a cross upon which the leader must consent to be impaled. Heaven’s demands are absolute.

“He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 John 3:16)

The degree to which we allow the cross of Christ to work in us will be the measure in which the resurrection life of Christ can be manifested through us in spiritual leadership. Remember, scars are the authentic marks of faithful discipleship and true spiritual leadership.

B. Loneliness. By it’s nature, the lot of a spiritual leader must be a lonely one. He must always be ahead of his followers. Though he must be the friendliest of men, there are areas of life in which he must be prepared to tread a lonely path. Human nature craves company, and its only natural to wish to share with others the heavy burdens of responsibility and care. Moses paid the price for his leadership, alone on the mount, and alone in the plain; the crushing loneliness of misunderstanding, criticism and impugning motive. And times have not changed, there is nothing new under the sun.

C. Fatigue. “The world is run by tired men.” The ever increasing demands made on a leader drain the nervous resources and wear down the most robust physique. But, the true spiritual leader knows where to go for renewal. Paul knew this secret,

”For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.¹⁶ For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” (2 Corinthians 4:15-16)

(1) The ministry of the Lord wearied Him, so He rested at the well. (John 4:6)

(2) When the needy woman touched the hem of His garment in faith, Jesus was aware that power had gone out of Him. (Mark 5:30) To overcome in this area, seize every legitimate opportunity for recuperation and recreation, or you will limit your own usefulness and ministry.

D. Criticism. There is nothing else that so kills the efficiency, capability, and initiative of a leader as criticism or a thing that directs one attention toward their inabilities as criticism.

(1) Destructive Criticism. It chips away at his self-respect and undermines his confidence in his ability to cope with his responsibilities. No leader is exempt from criticism, and his humility will nowhere be seen more clearly than in the manner in which he accepts and reacts. *“A soft answer turneth away wrath” (Proverbs 15:1)*

(2) Constructive Criticism. Sets one toward self-examination, heart-searching, and prayer which always leads to a deeper sense of utter dependence in God.

E. Rejection. “No man is ever fully accepted until he has, first of all been utterly rejected. The rugged path of utter rejection is trodden not only uncomplainingly, but with rejoicing. We often times will go through the fire and pruning, but this the divinely appointed way to the wealthy place in God.

(1) God’s way is full of limitations and restrictions leading us in a very narrow way, but ends in a broad place in God, full of life.

(2) Man’s way is broad without limitations and restrictions ends up in a very narrow way, that leads to ruin, loss, and death.

“Often the crowd does not recognize a leader until he has gone, and then they build a monument for him with the stones they threw at him in life.”

F. Pressure and Perplexity. God treats the spiritual leader as a mature adult, leaving more and more to his spiritual discernment and giving fewer sensible and tangible evidences of His guidance than in earlier years. The longer we walk with the Lord, the less we will hear His voice and maybe feel His presence. This perplexity adds to the inevitable pressures incidental to any responsible office. But do not worry, when the time comes to act, God always responds to His servant’s trust in Him.

G. Cost to Others. There is often a very real cost that has to be paid by persons other than the one entrusted with leadership. Indeed, it is they who sometimes pay the heavier price. Right or wrong they follow the leader in the direction He is leading.

H. Reaction to Adverse Opinion. Paul set before us a valuable pattern in this regard. *“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” (Galatians 1:10)*

To Paul, the voice of man was faint because his ear was tuned to the louder voice of God’s appraisal. He was fearless of man’s judgment because he was conscious he stood before a higher tribunal.