
Considerations for Today's Leaders

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The Importance of having a
Devotional Life with God

GCM Resource Center

The Importance of a Devotional Life with God

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Matthew 16:24

Jesus Christ was the greatest example of a leader devoted and dedicated to God. He stayed completely on course with the objectives from Heaven. He was also consistent and committed regardless of all external challenges. He made the choice to remain connected to God's purposes and perfect will all the way to the end. The committed life of Christ inspired the Apostle Paul to write, *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (Philippians 3:8-10).*

Jesus Christ epitomized what it meant to be a loyal and devoted leader. He did not turn his back on God's cause in the world no matter how much dysfunction he encountered. He remained faithful in his leadership role in spite of his personal trials and challenges. He persisted in proclaiming the solution to mankind's moral condition. The effectiveness of his persistence was captured in the gospel of *John 4:34*, when he shared with his disciples after they encouraged him to eat, "*My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work.*"

He was a leader that possessed extraordinary vision. Nothing else had an equal value or importance. Although he was fond of many people, he did not allow his sentiment for them to pull him away from his mission. Why was Jesus so devoted to God? Could it have been his duties and service? What about his religious upbringing? How about the time he received the Spirit descending upon him like a dove (*Matthew 3:16*)? It was his intimate and personal fellowship with God that yielded awesome and impacting results of his leadership.

If you are going to experience any margin of effectiveness for God it must begin with your “alone time” with him. Giftedness (God given might or ability) cannot sustain the virtue (God’s presence and power) entrusted to you. The work of the ministry extracts virtue; it does not sustain or replenish it. *Luke 8:40-46* records, *And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.*

Jesus knew virtue had come out of him, which prompted him to ask the question, “*who touched me?*” He also knew how important his devotional life was in sustaining and preparing him to minister to the needs of others. He characterized what it meant to rely on God’s power instead of his own strength and might for the ability to help others. He did not attempt to utilize secular resources in his ministry. The life of Jesus Christ was completely devoted in every area. He was sold out! The fortitude to successfully carry out his ministry was attributed to his time alone with God. If you study the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) you will notice how Jesus retreated to be alone with God (his Father). There were many benefits to this practice such as: sensitivity, compassion for others, and effective leadership.

Only God can be your lifeline as a leader. He is the source and provider of your virtue. It is in those alone times with him that you become wiser, more knowledgeable, and effective in your leadership role. Be careful to not rely upon

your outward works of spiritual success as the sole factor in your devotional life. The success in Jesus' ministry was an overflow of his time of intimate fellowship with God. Consider what he told the disciples, *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).*

It is important that you do not confuse your giftedness with your devotional life (your quiet time of studying the bible, prayer, and getting centered with God). If this happens, you may display one work after another with the danger of becoming emotionally depleted. This can have serious consequences for your spiritual, practical, and ministry life. Neglecting your personal time with God can lead to burnout. It can cause frustration, agitation, and rude emotions to harvest from your personality. One of the major results of being insensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit is when leaders rely on "head" knowledge about spiritual matters, over biblical truth. Let's face it, with the demands placed on spiritual leaders

today there is a strong need for alone time with God. It is important that you view your personal fellowship with God as the foundation for your leadership. The daily challenges of life and ministry are too much for your shoulders alone. It is vital that you have dedicated time with God to gain his perspective for your leadership. When you study the bible, you are training your mind to process and think on spiritual truths.

The Holy Bible is your guide to effective leadership. Jesus Christ relied heavily on God's Word for his leadership and personal success. As *Matthew 4:1-9* records, Jesus had three occasions to yield to the flesh (carnal or secular appetite); however, he chose to rely on God's word for success in his leadership and overcame personal challenges. Notice that each time he was tested he said, "*it is written.*" He refused to rely on his own wisdom and knowledge, but rather chose to rely on what was written about the matters he was facing. His persistence to keep his leadership under the authority of God is the reason we are free from the penalty of sin today. No matter

what capacity of leadership you are serving in, keep in mind that others will look to your example. Refuse to rely on your own wisdom as a spiritual leader. God has enough wisdom and knowledge to help shape you into an effective leader for his cause. The key is to spend time praying (divine communication with God) and searching the scriptures to develop God's mind. Your devotional periods call you to come sit with God; while your service periods require you to go represent Him. There must be a healthy balance, as both are important.

Too many leaders are depending on their giftedness to sustain their leadership. This is not the example that Jesus Christ left for spiritual leaders. He is the strongest, bravest, and most dependable leader God could offer humanity. Yet, he chose to live in submission to God's will over his own. The same perils of evil that the devil used in an attempt to derail the leadership of Jesus, he is trying on today's spiritual leaders. The devil's goal is to lure leaders away from fellowship with God. He knows that God is the sustainer of the virtue needed to

move leaders forward; therefore, he seeks to deceive. The last thing leaders need is self-reliance—their thinking that they are the reason for godly results. It is important to always remember as a leader that God has entrusted his virtue to you by way of His Spirit. The virtue and effectiveness does not belong to you. The Apostle Paul shared in *Philippians 2:13*, *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. It is God who is working in you and through you for his divine purposes.

Most leaders tend to sway to the side of serving and working for God more than their alone time with him. This can especially happen to new leaders because they are excited about seeing the results of helping people. Do you remember reading in *Luke 10:20*, where Jesus had to give the disciples perspective concerning their usage of God's power and share with them to *rejoice because their names are written in heaven?* Those who are new in having responsibility delegated to them from God can try to do too much in attempting to further God's cause; and when they become challenged they may experience discouragement.

This can become an unhealthy pattern in a seasoned leader's life as well. We see the results and get passionate about wanting more results. It is a common error in judgment that all leaders have made at one point or another. The idea is to realize our deepest need and dependency on God in all matters of our earthly lives and ministry service. This is acknowledged through daily encounters, experiences, and exposure in your alone time with God.

Reference

The Holy Bible: King James Version. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999