

Developing Leaders That Have the Attitudes of Christ

**Growing Christian Leaders Series
Manual 14**

by
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Serve and Equip

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The “Growing Christian Leaders Series” is the result of weekly topics which were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, “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, Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God-given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world, people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Success produces rewards until we die, but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.’” 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The Growing Christian Leaders Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1.

The Scribe's Method of Instruction or the Pattern of Jesus for Developing People

In our last three topics, we talked about the difference between the Greek style of teaching and the Hebrew style of teaching. We saw that the Greek style of instruction was primarily classroom instruction. In contrast, the Hebrew style of instruction was to show people by example. The scribes had adopted the Greek style of instruction. Christ shows us the contrast between the way that He taught and the way that the scribes taught to show the difference between the two styles of teaching. That will be the focus of our topic today.

In Matthew 23:1-4 we read, "Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers." In these verses, we see several things that the scribes did as a part of their teaching.

First, we see that the scribes spoke to the people and taught them the law that had been given by God to Moses. Christ told both the multitudes and also His disciples to listen and do what the scribes taught when they taught the Word of God. Here, we see that people can teach the Word of God even when they are not following Christ. Many false teachers teach certain things, from the Bible, even though they are not Christians. As Peter spoke about Paul in 2 Peter 3:16, he said, "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures." Those who do not know Christ can teach the Bible but they may twist it to satisfy themselves.

Second, Christ pointed out that the scribes did not do what they were teaching. Instead of letting the Word of God transform their own lives, the scribes were just telling what Moses had written. They did not every try to understand or apply to their own lives the things that they were teaching. Of course that meant that they did not put their trust in Christ. However, it also meant that they could not lead people to develop godly lives by their example because their lives were an example of hypocrisy. The scribes and also the Pharisees were practicing this hypocrisy. Christ said about them in Matthew 15:14, "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch." They did not know where they were going, so it was impossible for them to lead others in the right way.

Christ said the scribes and Pharisees were headed toward destruction and they were leading others to destruction. Matthew 23:27-28 says, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." Here, Christ makes it clear that they were spiritually dead and full of sin. They did things to try and deceive people so that people would think that they were righteous. However, they were actually practicing hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Third, we see that the scribes were putting heavy burdens on the people. However, they would not even lift a finger to try and help carry any of these burdens. Here, we see that the scribes were using the law to produce guilt in the lives of the people by adding their own rules. In fact, the Pharisees had added 613 rules. These rules included rules about the proper way for the people to wash their hands and many similar rules. One day, Christ had dinner with a Pharisee but did not follow the rule of the Pharisees. The Pharisee was very surprised that Christ would not follow the rules of the Pharisees. Christ's answer is in Luke 11:39, "Then the Lord said to him, 'Now you

Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness.” Christ pointed out that the religious leaders were depending on outward actions but had no inner change of heart.

Christ shared with these religious teachers that true teaching should produce a changed life so that the teachers could lead by their own example. In Matthew 23:23, Christ told them, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.” Christ made it clear that the religious leaders were not obeying the very laws that they were teaching. He said in several passages that they were actually bringing judgment on themselves. They were actually driving people with fear, instead of leading them with love.

Christ also explained why the scribes even taught the law. Matthew 23:5-7 says, “But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, “greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, “Rabbi, Rabbi.”” These verses make it clear that their purpose was not to bring glory to God. Instead, their purpose was to focus attention on themselves.

In contrast, Christ worked to develop the disciples and help them grow and become godly spiritual leaders. Christ developed the disciples by taking them with Him. In Matthew 4:16-21, Christ told Peter, Andrew, James and John, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Then Matthew 4:22-23 says, “And immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” Here, we see that Christ knew that the lives of the disciples would be transformed as they followed Him.

First, Christ showed the disciples how to learn to understand and apply the Word of God. Matthew 7:28-29 says, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Here, we see that Christ taught in a totally different way than the scribes. The Word of God has its own authority. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The Word will reveal to people the very intents that are within their own hearts.

Second, Christ showed the disciples how to apply the Word of God to their own lives so that their lives were being transformed. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” As the Word of God was transforming their minds, they were growing in godly character. Acts 4:13 says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” Even the scribes and other religious leaders that had rejected Christ had to recognize that the character of these men had been transformed by being with Christ.

Third, Christ showed the disciples how to effectively share the Word of God with others by depending on the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 4:31 says, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” Here, we see that the disciples had grown in ministry skills because they had learned to depend on the Holy Spirit instead of depending on their own strength.

The development process that Christ used to develop the disciples was totally different than the

teaching of the scribes. The disciples learned the Word of God and also learned that the Word is living and powerful. The disciples grew in godly character. The disciples grew in ministry skills as they learned to depend on the Holy Spirit. Their lives and their ministries were transformed.

Their transformed lives resulted in two accusations being brought against the early Christians. Acts 5:28 says, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!” The scribes and other religious leaders realized that the lives and teachings of the disciples had radically changed the city of Jerusalem. Acts 17:6 says, “But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, ‘These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.’” Here, we see that their ministry did not stop in Jerusalem but continued to spread.

How do you teach in your life and through your life? Do you teach like the scribes and just give people knowledge that does not change your life or theirs, or do you follow the pattern of Christ and show others by your example how the Word of God has changed your thinking, has changed and developed godly character in your life and has equipped you to serve the Lord effectively? The answers that you give to these questions will determine whether you are able to develop godly spiritual leaders. May the Lord richly bless you as you make it your goal to develop godly reproducing leaders by your example as you show them how to grow in their knowledge of the Word of God, show them how to grow in godly character and grow in effective ministry.

Developing Proud Followers or Developing Servant Leaders

Many times, we teach more by our example than we teach by our words. That was certainly also true in the time of Christ. In our topic today, we will see what kind of people the scribes developed by their example and we will contrast that with the example provided by Christ. If we are going to develop godly leaders that are becoming more and more like Christ, we must learn to follow His example and not the example of the scribes.

In Mark 12:38-40 we read, “Then He said to them in His teaching, "Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.” In these verses, we see why those who followed the scribes became proud just like the scribes.

First, we see that the scribes loved recognition. Mark 12:38 says, “Then He said to them in His teaching, ‘Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplace.’” Here, we see that even the way they dressed was designed to get noticed by the people. They also liked to be called by their titles in the marketplace. They wanted people to notice them and call them by the title of “Rabbi” because that was their way of making themselves more important than others.

Second, we see that the scribes wanted positions of power. Mark 12:39 says, “The best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts.” When the scribes went to the synagogues they wanted to be seated in the seats that were for honored guests. The same was true when they went to a feast. They wanted to be seated in the best places because that was their way of trying to show the people that they had power and authority. They wanted everyone to treat them like they had much authority.

Third, we see that the scribes were greedy. Mark 12:40 says, “Who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.” Here, we see that the scribes were using their positions to actually steal the houses of the widows because the widows had no one to defend them. We see that their desire was to gain the possessions of others for themselves. They chose to steal from those who were defenseless like the widows.

Fourth, Mark 12:40 also shows us that the scribes were hypocrites. They would try to cover up the fact that they were actually stealing from the widows by saying long prayers asking God to provide for these very widows from whom they were stealing. They also said long prayers on other occasions to try and make people think that they were very spiritual. Of course in their prayers they were not even talking to God. Like the Pharisee in Luke 18:11, the scribes were actually praying to themselves.

Fifth, the scribes loved to get others to become like themselves. Matthew 23:15 says, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” The scribes were always trying to get others to become their followers. They would do whatever it took to get even one more person to follow them. However, in the process of getting such a person to follow them, they made that person even worse than themselves.

Sixth, the scribes were showing each person that followed them how to become a person filled with pride. They were teaching all of the wrong attitudes by their example. As individuals followed the example of the scribes, they developed the same wrong thoughts and attitudes. A thought develops

an attitude. An attitude develops an action. An action soon becomes a habit. Habits develop a lifestyle. Finally, a lifestyle determines a destiny. A life that is lived for self is the life of a person that is headed for eternal destruction.

In contrast, Christ was continually showing the disciples how to love and serve others. Christ showed the disciples how to serve the little children. Luke 18:15-16 says, "Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.'" Christ showed the disciples by His example the importance of taking time to minister to very young children and their families.

Christ also showed the disciples how to show love to the rejected. In John 8:3-5, we read, "Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?'" The scribes and the Pharisees were enjoying the opportunity to humiliate this woman as well as try to set a trap for Christ. Christ told the scribes and the Pharisees that the one that was without sin should cast the first stone.

The scribes and the Pharisees were convicted by their own consciences and each one tried to leave without being noticed. Then, Christ showed the disciples by His example how to show love to this woman that had been rejected and humiliated. John 8:10-11 says, "When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, 'Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.'" Instead of condemning the woman, Christ forgave her and set her free to live a changed life. The disciples learned by example how to love the rejected.

Christ also showed by His own example how to love a person that rejected Him. Christ showed the same love to Judas throughout His ministry that He showed to the other eleven. This is shown by the fact that when Christ said one of them would betray Him none of them even suspected Judas. Instead they asked the question, "Lord, is it I?" The other disciples saw that Jesus called Judas a friend even at the very time Judas was betraying Christ. Matthew 26:50 says, "But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?' Then, they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him." Christ loved Judas to the very end.

The greatest example that Christ gave the disciples was when He gave His own life to pay the penalty for our sins. Philippians 2:5-8 says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." Christ was the Creator of the entire universe. However, He humbled Himself and became a helpless infant and was born in a stable.

In addition to taking the limitations of mankind, He chose to become a bondservant. The disciples were able to observe His example as He served them. After washing the feet of the disciples, Christ said in John 13:15, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." Christ did not just tell the disciples to serve one another. Instead, Christ chose to show the disciples how to serve by His own example.

In addition to becoming a man and choosing to take even the lowly job of washing the feet of the disciples, Christ gave the greatest example to follow when He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. As the disciples saw Christ go to the cross to die for them, they learned from His example. In fact, they also became willing to live and speak for

Christ so that others could receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In fact, they followed the example of Christ and died for their faith in Christ.

The Lord gives each of us the opportunity to help others grow in their spiritual lives. Remember that they will become like us whether that is good or bad. If we provide an example like the example of the scribes, we will cause people to become proud. If we love and serve people as Christ loved and served people, we will have the opportunity to help develop godly leaders who are becoming more like Christ. We teach them much more through our example than we teach them with our words. That is why it is so important to live what we teach. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

Christ has given us a very great privilege by giving us the opportunity to show His love to others by our example. We will help them learn to follow the example of Christ as we show the attitudes of Christ by our own example. Love and service are not the natural response of most people. Such attitudes are developed as people see the example of others. May the Lord richly bless you as you develop godly servant leaders by giving others an example to follow by your own life.

3.

Developing Dynamic People or Developing All Christians

Many times, the world and even many Christians look for people with a lot of potential and then develop those people because they are very dynamic. In contrast, Christ placed the focus on developing every Christian so that every Christian is equipped to do the work of the Lord. We will see that Christ did not just develop people because they were dynamic. Instead His great concern was the spiritual life of each person.

One day a dynamic young man came running to Christ. Mark 10:17 says, “Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” Here, we see that this young man was a very dynamic young man. He had goals in his life and he wanted to know how to inherit eternal life. As we look at this young man, he certainly looks like a young man with great potential.

Second, we see that he had already become a leader. Luke 18:18 says, “Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’” Here, we see that this young man is already called a ruler. He already had a position of influence and many people looked to him for leadership. Such a young ruler is exactly what the world looks for when they look for a leader. Many Christians use the same standard as they look for leaders because they follow the example of the world.

Third, we see that this young man had a respectful attitude. Mark 10:17 says, “Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’” As this young man knelt before Christ, it was easy to see that he had an attitude of respect for Christ. He even knew how to do the right things to show that respect.

Fourth, we see that this young man obeyed the law. Mark 10:19-20 tells how he responded when Christ mentioned part of the law. Those verses say, “‘You know the commandments: “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not bear false witness,” “Do not defraud,” “Honor your father and your mother.”’” And he answered and said to Him, ‘Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.’” Here, we see that this young man was very concerned to obey the law in his relationships with other people. He worked hard to obey all of the commandments that related to other people.

Fifth, this young man had a lot of money that could have helped others. Mark 10:22 says, “But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” Here, we see that this young man made the choice not to follow Christ. Instead, he made the choice to follow his money. Here, we see that Christ always gave people the choice to follow Him or the choice to follow their own desires. In this case, this young man made the choice to turn away from Christ and Christ did not try to make the requirements easier in order to get this young man with lots of potential to follow him.

Sixth, the verse in the previous paragraph shows us that this young man had the wrong priorities in his life. His priorities were based on the things of this world instead of being based on eternal values. A person can be very dynamic but if that person has worldly values instead of godly values, that person will not develop into a godly spiritual leader. Christ knew that a dynamic person with the wrong values would not have a desire to make the things of Christ a priority in his life.

Instead of focusing on dynamic people, Christ makes it clear that it is His desire to help every

Christian develop and become an effective servant. Christ led Paul to write some key principles in Ephesians 4:15-16. Those verses say, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Notice three phrases in these verses: “the whole body”, “every joint supplies” and “every part does its share”.

First, we see that Christ wants every Christian to learn to speak the truth. Christ showed us the importance of speaking the truth by His example. In John 7:16, we read, “Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.’” This means that the responsibility of each spiritual leader is to teach the Word of God to people so that everyone learns the truth. It also means that opportunities are to be provided within the structure of the church to help each person learn to speak the truth that they are learning. Many people have sat in church for years and know a lot of truth, but they have never been shown how or been given the opportunity to share what they have learned with others.

Second, we see that Christ wants every Christian to learn to speak that truth in love. Some Christians have learned to speak the truth, but they have not learned to walk in love. As a result, they are motivated by the fear of people, instead of being motivated by the love of Christ. As a result, when they share the Word of God they drive people away from Christ instead of leading people to Christ. Christ showed by example how to minister to people in love. As a result, Mark 12:37 says, “...And the common people heard Him gladly.” The common people could see that Christ loved them.

Third, we see that Christ wants every Christian to learn to function in His body. Ephesians 4:16 says, “From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Christ wants the whole body to learn to speak the truth in love. Christ showed this by His example when He told the disciples in Mark 16:15, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Christ knew that the only way every person would hear was if every Christian learned to share the Word in love.

Fourth, we see that Christ wants every Christian to be equipped to do his part. Ephesians 4:16 does not say to equip the dynamic people to do their part. However, it does say that the whole body is to do its part. That is why Ephesians 4:11-13 says that the leaders of the church are to equip all of the saints to do the work of the ministry. Christ showed this by His example as He continually equipped those who followed Him to do their part. Christ called some fishermen and invited them to follow Him and learn how to become fishers of men in Mark 1:16-20. Christ told these men that He wanted them to be equipped to minister to others.

Fifth, we see that Christ wants every Christian to learn to do his share. As the phrase in Ephesians 4:16 says, “...by which every part does its share...” In the context of Ephesians 4, we see that passage uses the comparison of a body where every part is learning to function effectively. Christ told the leper in Mark 1:44 “...But go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” Christ told the man that had been demon possessed in Mark 5:19, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” Christ showed that He wanted every follower to learn to do his part.

We also see that Christ helped the disciples learn from His example that they were to equip every Christian to do the five things mentioned above. The apostles realized that they were not to try to do everything by themselves. Instead, they were to immediately begin showing those who became followers of Christ how to begin to function in the body of Christ. Acts 2:42 says, “And they

continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." The disciples immediately began teaching the teachings of Christ to all of the new believers to equip them to share the truth and to share it in love.

In addition to equipping all of the new believers to learn to speak the truth in love, the early church also equipped all Christians to minister to others. Acts 6:1 tells us, "Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying..." Then Acts 6:7 says, "Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith." Here, we see that the early Christians did not just become followers. Instead they became disciples that were equipped to minister effectively to others. This is illustrated in Acts 8:1, 4 where we read, "Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles...Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." The apostles developed all Christians and equipped them to speak the truth in love wherever they went.

1 Peter 2:21 says, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps." One of the ways that we are to follow the example of Christ is to develop and equip all Christians and not just those that are dynamic. May the Lord richly bless you as you show developing leaders by your example how to equip all Christians and help each one to learn to function effectively as a part of the body of Christ.

Esau's Pattern of Driving or Christ's Pattern of Leading

In Hebrews 12:15-17, we see that Esau is used as an example. However, he is used as a negative example to show us the results of bitterness and worldly values. Those verses say, "Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears." We see that Esau sold his spiritual leadership for a bowl of stew.

Because Esau did not follow the Lord or seek godly values to lead his life, we see that it affected everything in his life including his leadership. That is illustrated for us in Genesis 33:12-14 where we read, "Then Esau said, 'Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you.' But Jacob said to him, 'My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir.'" In these verses, we learn six things about the leadership style of Esau.

First, we see that Esau was used to telling others what to do. We see that Esau just expected others to do what he said and follow him where he led. In actual fact, at this point in time, Esau was coming as a military commander and he was expecting everyone else to follow the chain of command. Genesis 32:6 says, "Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.'" Esau expected everyone to follow his chain of command.

Second, we see that the plan of Esau was to reach the goal as quickly as possible. His attitude and focus was to get to Seir as quickly as possible. In the world, it is common for people to focus on their goals instead of focusing on either God's goals or on the people involved. Many Christians also follow the example of the world and are so focused on their own goals that they hurt the development of people.

Third, we see that the attitude of Esau was to get going now. The world is like Esau. It wants immediate action. The world does not take time to pray and ask God what to do. Their only concern is to start doing something. Many times, Christians do the same thing. They depend on their plans and never pray and ask the Lord to show His will. When that happens, there may be a lot of activity, but nothing is being accomplished.

Fourth, we see that Esau thought that leadership meant to drive others. We see what Jacob told Esau in Genesis 33:13. That verse says, "But Jacob said to him, 'My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die.'" Jacob knew that the men of Esau would drive the flock hard to reach their goal. Godly leadership recognizes that the first part of the word leadership is lead not drive. If Christians are led by the love of Christ, they will lead others. If Christians are driven by the fear of people, they will drive others.

Fifth, we see that Esau gave no thought to the fact that he might destroy both the children and the sheep by driving them hard. Jacob also knew that the result of driving the sheep hard would be that it would kill the sheep and especially the lambs that they were nursing. As a result, Jacob said in Genesis 33:14, "Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord

in Seir.” Jacob focused on the needs of the flock and so he was able to lead them effectively.

Sixth, we see that Esau had no understanding of the needs of the children. The world often forgets the needs of the children. It is also very easy for Christians to forget the needs of either physical children or spiritual children. Sometimes, Christians become so busy, they neglect the needs of their physical children. Later in life, they wonder why their children have no interest in the things of the Lord. The same often happens with new Christians and spiritual children. 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 show us that two of the key priorities of spiritual leaders are: to provide the love and care of a nursing mother and the example of a godly father to new Christians to help them in their spiritual growth.

We see that Christ demonstrated a very different pattern of leadership. John 13:4-5 shows us that Christ chose to lead his disciples by showing them what to do. Those verses say that Jesus “...rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.” Christ did not preach a sermon on humility. Instead, Christ showed an example of humility by beginning to wash the feet of the disciples.

Second, John 13:6-10 shows that Christ took time to deal with the questions of the disciples. Peter was embarrassed and did not want Jesus to wash his feet, because he realized that he should have offered to wash the feet of Christ. Christ explained to Peter that it was necessary for Christ to wash Peter's feet if he wanted to be a part with Christ. Then, Peter asked Christ to wash his hands and head as well. Christ explained that Peter only needed his feet washed. The disciples had already had their bath so all they needed was the dust washed from their feet. When we put our trust in Christ, we have already had our sin forgiven. We just need the daily cleansing from the sins that we commit each day.

Third, we see in John 13:12 that Christ took time to explain what He was doing. That verse says, “So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" Christ was never in a hurry. He realized that the disciples needed to understand why He did what He did. In order to be an effective leader, we need to take time to explain why we do what we do. That way, those that are following us will understand why we are doing the things that we do. Christ explained this in John 15:15, “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” Christ said that He was treating the disciples as friends, instead of servants, by explaining to them what He was doing.

Fourth, in John 13:13-14, we see that Christ chose to serve rather than command others. Those verses say, “You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.” Christ showed the disciples how to lead by serving one another. People will realize that godly leadership is best learned through example if we will take the time to serve them and meet their needs. Their lives will be transformed as we serve them by helping them grow spiritually.

Fifth, we see that Christ chose to lead by example. John 13:15-16 says, “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.” Christ provided an example by what He did. Many people want to serve Christ, but they do not know what to do. If we will take them with us and show them how to serve the Lord, they will become effective in serving the Lord.

Sixth, we see that Christ told the disciples how to be blessed. John 13:17 says, “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” Christ was encouraging the disciples to follow His

example and not just hear His words. In the same way, we are to show Christians how to serve Christ. Then, we are to give them the opportunity to do the things that we have shown them. Because they have been shown how to serve the Lord by our example, they will be able to experience the blessing of the Lord as they see the Lord work through their lives as they follow our example.

The Bible helps us to see that the driving style of Esau will be destructive. Esau shows us that leadership is not exercised by driving people. In contrast, the style of Christ by which He led His disciples shows us the true meaning of leadership. Christ led them by showing them how to serve Him. He encouraged them to follow His example as He equipped them to serve the Lord. Christ took more than three years to show the disciples how to serve the Father. He provided them an example in many different areas of their lives. The result of this style of leadership was that their lives were transformed.

Christ also treated them as friends and not as servants as He shared His plans with them. Then in John 20:17, Christ called His disciples His brethren. By this title, He showed that He was treating them as equal partners as He led them. As a result, those disciples experienced such great blessing that they were willing to give their own lives for Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you lead developing leaders by providing an example and helping them become friends that share your plans and partners who serve together in ministry with you.

Handling Opposition Pharaoh's Way or Handling Opposition Christ's Way

In the book of Exodus, we read that God sent Moses to Egypt to lead the nation of Israel out of their bondage to Pharaoh. Moses was told to lead Israel to the land that God had promised more than four hundred years earlier to Abraham. However, for many years the people had been slaves in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh had no intention of allowing the people to leave Egypt. As a result, Moses and Aaron faced immediate conflict when they went to talk to Pharaoh.

Exodus 5:1-2 says, "Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go.'" Exodus 5:6-9 tells how Pharaoh handled opposition, "So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, 'You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, "Let us go and sacrifice to our God." Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words.'" We see that Pharaoh handled opposition by making those who opposed suffer.

We see six things about Pharaoh in these verses. First, Pharaoh said in Exodus 5:1, "I do not know the Lord." Any person that does not know the Lord will follow the world's form of leadership. Such a person does not have the desires that Christ gives to those that follow Him. In fact, a person that does not know the Lord is controlled by his or her own sinful desires. However, many people that become Christians and even become leaders continue to act based on their own desires instead of seeking the will of Christ.

Second, Pharaoh said he would not obey the Lord. In Exodus 5:1, Pharaoh said, "'Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?'" This verse shows us that Pharaoh had no intention to obey the Lord. In fact, his statement is a direct refusal. When people reject God, they will also refuse to obey God even when they hear a direct commandment from God. This even happens after people become Christians. They may know what the Word of God says, but refuse to obey the Word. This puts a person in a difficult situation. It is impossible to enjoy the blessing and peace of the Lord when we are refusing to do what He commands us to do.

Third, Pharaoh rejected the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Exodus 5:4-5 says, "Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get back to your labor." And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor!" Without even investigating, Pharaoh immediately concluded that the people were taking a rest from their work. Here, we see that Pharaoh was unwilling to even listen to Moses because he felt that Moses was opposing him and that he was leading the people to oppose him. Pharaoh did not like any opposition to his desires and plans.

Fourth, Pharaoh immediately began to get even. Exodus 5:6-8 says, "So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, "You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'" Here, we see that Pharaoh handled opposition by making those who opposed him suffer for it. Many people are like Pharaoh and want to get even by making others suffer when someone opposes them.

Fifth, Pharaoh punished the people by making them work harder. Verses 7 through 19 show that

Pharaoh refused to provide any straw for the bricks that he was forcing the people to make. Instead, he made the people scatter throughout the land to find straw for their bricks. At the same time he continued to require them to make the same number of bricks. The leaders of Israel were beaten when the people were not able to make as many bricks as they had been making.

Sixth, Pharaoh caused the people to give up any hope of better conditions. Exodus 5:20-21 says, "Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. And they said to them, 'Let the Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us.'" The leaders of Israel thought that they were going to be killed by Pharaoh because Moses had tried to set them free from Pharaoh. They spoke like people that had no hope for the future.

In contrast, Christ both taught and showed by His own example that as Christians we are to handle opposition in a very different way. Matthew 5:44-45 says, "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Christ taught us that we do not need to handle opposition like the world handles it. In fact, we are to do just the opposite of the world.

First, Christ says that we are to love our enemies. Romans 12:21 says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." When a Christian is overcome by evil, that Christian will handle opposition in a very similar way to the way that Pharaoh handled opposition. Christ says that we are to do just the opposite. We are to overcome that evil by doing good. As we love our enemies, Christ will work in their hearts and lives. Even if they harden their own hearts, Christ will use the love that we show toward them to cause others to realize the great change that Christ can make in the lives of those that seek to obey and please Him. That love, may draw others to Christ.

Second, Christ says that we are to bless those that curse us. 1 Peter 3:9 says, "Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing." As followers of Christ, we are not to follow the example of the world. Even when others speak evil of us Christ can give us His power to give a blessing instead as we yield to Him. That is what Christ calls us to do, because He has promised that we will inherit a blessing.

Third, Christ says that we are to do good to our enemy. Here, we see that words will be followed by actions if we choose to develop the attitudes of Christ in our lives. Instead of looking for ways to get even with those who oppose us, we will look for ways to show kindness to those that oppose us. Jesus showed this kind of kindness to Judas when Judas came to betray Him. Matthew 26:50 says, "But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him." Jesus treated Judas as a friend at the very moment that Judas was betraying Him.

Fourth, Christ says that we are to pray for those that persecute us. Regardless of what people might do to us, Christ says that He will give us the strength to respond to that opposition by praying for those that oppose us. Stephen showed us that Christ will give us His strength to pray for those that persecute us if we ask Him for that strength. Acts 7:60 says, "Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep." The prayer of Stephen was something that Paul never forgot because it helped to change his life. In Acts 22:20, as Paul gave his testimony to the Jews he said, "And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him."

Fifth, Christ says that the Father also loves even those who are unjust. Matthew 5:45 says, “That you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” As we learn to show the attitudes of Christ in our lives, we are showing that we are the sons of our Father in heaven. We will only show these attitudes as we learn to yield our lives to Christ instead of acting in our own strength.

Sixth, Christ showed us how to do these things by His own example. In Luke 23:34, Christ prayed, “‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’ And they divided His garments and cast lots.” Christ showed us by His own example that it is possible to forgive in any situation. The key is that we have to learn to ask Christ to give us His strength to forgive, instead of trying to forgive in our own strength.

Do you handle opposition like Pharoah or are you learning to handle opposition like Christ? If we are learning to handle opposition like Christ by asking Him to give us His power as we yield to Him, we will see our own lives transformed. In addition, we will also see the Lord use our example to help transform the lives of others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to have the attitudes of Christ and help them learn to handle opposition by following the example of Christ.

The Religious Leaders Tried to Close Minds While Christ Expanded Vision

Leaders can try to center everything around themselves by closing their minds and trying to close the minds of others or leaders can expand the vision of people so that people develop a vision to serve others. In the time of Christ, the chief priests and Pharisees chose to try and close the minds of others. In contrast, Christ was continually working to expand the vision of His followers. In our topic today, we will see the example of the chief priests and contrast it with the example of Christ.

First, we see that the chief priests did not want the people to learn. John 7:28-30 says, “Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, ‘You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.’ Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.” Then, John 7:45-46 we read, “Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, ‘Why have you not brought Him?’ The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’” Here, we see that the chief priests tried to stop Christ from teaching the people.

Second, we see that the chief priests accused others of being deceived. John 7:47 says, “Then the Pharisees answered them, ‘Are you also deceived?’” The religious leaders had sent men to arrest Christ. Those men heard the teaching of Christ and recognized that no one had ever taught like Christ. Instead of listening to the men that had heard Christ, the chief priests accused them of being deceived. Here, we see that the chief priests and Pharisees were doing everything possible to try and stop people from following Christ. This was happening even though their own workers recognized the greatness of the teaching of Christ.

Third, the chief priests used sarcasm. John 7:48 says, “Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?” Here, we see that the religious leaders began to use sarcasm to try and humiliate their workers. Many times when people are trying to control other people, they will use sarcasm to try and make others feel that they know nothing. Here, we see that this is one of the things that the chief priests and Pharisees were doing to try and maintain their control.

Fourth, the chief priests and Pharisees tried to make other people think that they had superior knowledge. In John 7:48-49, they said, “Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” They were trying to make the people think that their rejection of Christ was based on their superior knowledge instead of their unbelief. They continued to claim that the people were ignorant. Many people will try to close the minds of others so that they can control them by claiming to have superior knowledge. In actual fact, they are really trying to control others by fear.

Fifth, the chief priests and Pharisees had closed their minds. John 7:50-52 says, “Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, ‘Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?’ They answered and said to him, ‘Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.’” One of their own leaders said that they were not to condemn a person before they heard what that person said and saw what that person did. Instead of obeying the law, the religious leaders immediately closed their minds and refused to even listen to Nicodemus.

In contrast to closing minds, Christ chose to expand the vision of those that followed Him. First, we see that Christ expanded the vision of His followers to include their family and friends. In John 1:40-42, Andrew became concerned about his brother and brought him to meet Christ. Then, in John 1:43-46, Philip became concerned about his friend Nathanael and brought him to meet Christ.

From the first day that these men followed Christ, they became concerned to help others meet Christ.

Second, we see that Christ expanded the vision of the disciples to the next towns. Mark 1:38-39 says, "But He said to them, 'Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.' And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons." Christ invited the disciples to go with Him and see His vision for the next towns. In the process, they were being shown the spiritual needs of others. Christ kept expanding this vision by taking them with Him throughout the entire region of Galilee.

Third, Christ expanded the vision of the disciples to people that were rejected by the other Jews. Jesus took the disciples along with Him as He traveled north from Galilee to the cities of Tyre and Sidon. There, Christ met a woman that had a daughter that was demon possessed. Christ helped to expand the vision of the disciples to see the need of these Gentiles. Matthew 15:28 says, "Then Jesus answered and said to her, 'O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour." The disciples began to realize that even Gentiles afflicted by demons could also place their faith in Christ.

Fourth, Christ also expanded the vision of the disciples to rejected cultures. The Jews would travel many extra miles to avoid going through Samaria. John 4:4 tells us that Christ did just the opposite. That verse says, "But He needed to go through Samaria." Christ had two reasons why He needed to go through Samaria. He wanted to meet the spiritual needs of the Samaritans. Christ also wanted to expand the vision of the disciples.

We see that Christ expanded the vision of the disciples in John 4:35. That verse says, "'Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!'" Then, John 4:41-42 tells how Christ met the spiritual need of the Samaritans. Those verses say, "And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.'" The disciples learned that the Samaritans were also open to placing their faith in Christ.

Fifth, Christ expanded the vision of the disciples to the entire world. The final words of Christ before He returned to heaven are given for us in Acts 1. In Acts 1:8-9 we read, "'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.' Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." People often remember the last words that a person speaks. The disciples lived with the last words of Christ guiding their ministry for the rest of their lives. They continued to spread the good news of the death and resurrection of Christ to the ends of the world.

The two examples of the religious leaders and of Christ raise some very important questions. Why did the religious leaders refuse to even listen to Christ? Why did they mock and make fun of those that chose to listen to Christ? Why did they turn against Nicodemus when he spoke for Christ? The answer to all of these questions is that they were trying to close the minds of the people so that they could control the people by fear. They were afraid that if the people began listening to Christ, they would lose their power and control as religious leaders.

We also need to ask some questions about the ministry of Christ. Why did He encourage the disciples to tell their relatives and friends about Him? Why did Christ want the disciples to go with Him to the next towns and then throughout Galilee? Why did Christ take the disciples with Him to the Gentile towns of Tyre and Sidon? Why did Christ need to go through Samaria when the

disciples were traveling with Him? Why did Christ use His last words to the disciples to help focus their vision on the ends of the earth? Christ did these things to show the disciples that He was concerned for people in every part of the earth.

What attitudes are we developing in the people with whom we have contact? Are we trying to close their minds and control them by fear so that we can please ourselves? Are we following the example of Christ by taking people with us and showing them the spiritual needs of people wherever we go so that they can develop a vision to help those people learn about Christ? The answers to these questions will probably tell us whether we are trying to control people and get them to follow us, or whether we are trying to lead people by our example and expand their vision so that they will help others learn how to know and follow Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you provide an example for others to follow as they see your vision to help others learn to know and follow Christ.

The Pharisees' Pattern of Prayer or Christ's Pattern of Prayer

In the time of Christ, the Pharisees were very self-righteous. They had many rules about the way that they were to do almost everything in their lives. They worked hard to get other people to follow their rules. At the same time, they did not follow their own rules. Christ often confronted them for their hypocrisy. In addition to all of their rules, their self-righteous attitude also affected the way that they prayed. Today, we will see how their attitudes affected their prayer life.

In Luke 18:9-14, Christ gives us a parable about the prayer life of the Pharisees. Those verses say, "Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'" In these verses, we learn several very important lessons about the Pharisees.

First, we see they trusted in themselves that they were righteous. We see that they did not trust the Lord. They had rejected God and were depending on their own efforts. As a result, they had reached the conclusion that they were righteous because they chose to measure their religious activities rather than to examine their hearts. In fact, they even boasted about their religious activities.

Second, we see that they despised others. Here, we see that in addition to rejecting God they also chose to reject people. In fact, they chose to despise people. The word that is used here means *to treat with contempt*. The Pharisees treated any that were not a part of their group with contempt and felt that they were the only people who deserved any respect from others.

Third, we see that the Pharisee prayed with himself. Since the Pharisee rejected God, the only person to whom he could pray was himself. As we read his prayer, we will see that he was really praising himself. He wanted everyone that heard him to think that he was very good and very religious. He was religious but he totally lacked any relationship with God.

Fourth, we see that the Pharisee praised himself for his self-righteous attitudes. The Pharisee thanked God that he was not like other people and then went on to list the sins of others. Here, we see that the Pharisee reveals the attitudes of his heart. He forgot that 1 Samuel 16:7 says, "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'" This Pharisee did not know that his heart was deceitful and desperately wicked.

Fifth, we see that the Pharisee focused on the sins of others. The Pharisee listed some of the sins he said other people were committing. He particularly chose to focus on the sins of the tax collector. He had no understanding of a verse like 2 Corinthians 10:12, "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." This Pharisee tried to list all of what he felt were his good points and all of the things that he felt were the bad things in others.

Sixth, we see that the Pharisee focused on his own good works. As the Pharisee prayed, he talked about all of the things that he did. This shows us that he was depending completely on his own efforts. He talked about his fasting and how he gave tithes. Here, we see that religious people depend on what they are doing through their own efforts. They do not depend on what Christ has done for them. As a result, their religion is based on their own works. Hebrews 4:10 tells us that we must cease from depending on our own works if we want to enter into the rest of God. That verse says, “For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”

Seventh, we see that the Pharisee did not receive forgiveness of sins. Since there was no attitude of repentance on the part of the Pharisee, it was impossible for him to have his sins forgiven. In fact, he did not even recognize that he was a sinner that needed to have his sins forgiven.

In contrast, we see the prayer of Christ in Luke 11:1-4 where we read, “Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’ So He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.’” In this prayer, we see that Christ showed us the kind of prayer that God hears and answers.

First, Christ prayed to the Father. If we want God to hear and answer our prayers we must make the choice to pray to Him and come to Him with our prayers of thanksgiving and with our requests. He is always ready to listen to us when we come to Him as His children.

Second, Christ focused on the character of the Father. In this prayer, we see that Christ focused on the fact that the name of the Father is holy. As we pray, we are to recognize that we are coming to One that is holy and without sin. He is the Holy One that makes us holy.

Third, Christ focused on the work of the Father. Christ prayed that the kingdom of the Father would come. As we pray for the work of God in the lives of the people of this world, we want to pray that God will complete His work in their lives. This includes both their salvation and their growth to spiritual maturity.

Fourth, Christ prayed for the will of God. Many times, people pray and ask God to do their will and give them what they want. In contrast, Christ shows us that we are to pray for God to work His will and not focus on our desires. The will of the Father is already being done in heaven, so we are to pray that He will give us His strength to carry out his will on this earth.

Fifth, we see that Christ tells us to pray for our daily needs. Here, we see that we are to learn to pray that the Lord will supply our needs day by day. When Israel was in the wilderness, they had to gather the manna that they needed for food each morning. In the same way, the Father wants us to come to Him with our needs each day. We can expect Him to supply our needs, as we trust Him instead of trying to depend on ourselves.

Sixth, Christ told us to pray for forgiveness of sins. When Christ died on the cross, He paid the penalty for our sins. At the moment we repented and placed our trust in Christ, our sin – past, present and future - was forgiven. However, we continue to commit sins day by day. As a result, 1 John 1:9 tells us, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” When we repented, our sin was forgiven and we became the children of God. That is an eternal relationship. However, when we sin, we confess our sins so that we maintain our fellowship with the Father and do not allow unconfessed sin to hinder that fellowship.

Seventh, Christ told us to pray that we would have victory over temptation. We all face the

temptation to sin every day. 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 tells us, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” Here, we see that we are not to depend on our own strength for victory over temptation. Instead, we are to pray that God will give us His strength to have victory over temptation. As we ask for His strength, He will give us victory.

The Pharisees did not see God answer their prayers, because they did not know the Father and did not pray to Him. Christ wants us to help developing Christians learn how to pray to the Father so that they will learn what and how to pray. As developing Christians learn to follow the example of Christ in their prayers, they will see the Father work in their lives and through their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show others by your example how to pray as Christ prayed.

Ahab's Pattern of Busyness or Christ's Pattern of Effectiveness

In our lives, it is possible to be very busy and yet not be effective. Ahab was a king in the Old Testament that was busy. However, he was not effective at doing what God told him to do because he did not even want to listen to God. God sent a prophet to speak to Ahab about his failure to do what God told him to do. That prophet disguised himself and waited for Ahab to pass by the place where he was. When Ahab passed by, the prophet used himself as an example of what Ahab had done. We will see that Ahab was busy, but he was not effective, because he did not do what God had told him to do.

We have the words that the prophet spoke to Ahab in 1 Kings 20:39-43. Those verses say, "Now as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, 'Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, "Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver." While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone.' Then the king of Israel said to him, 'So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it.' And he hastened to take the bandage away from his eyes; and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. Then he said to him, 'Thus says the Lord: "Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.'" So the king of Israel went to his house sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria."

First, in verse 40, we see Ahab was, "Busy here and there." Ahab found many things to keep himself busy. Every person is given the same number of hours in a day. Some people will be very busy doing things that are not important. Others are busy doing things that are sin. We do not know what Ahab was doing, but we do know that he was busy. God has also given us instructions in His Word, but we can become very busy doing lots of other things.

Second, verses 41 and 42 show us that Ahab had not done what God had told him to do. God had given Ahab a specific commandment. He had failed to do what God had commanded. In this series of topics, we are focusing on how to help developing leaders develop the attitudes of Christ. We need to help developing leaders realize that they may even be busy doing the right things, but if they do those things with the wrong attitudes, they will not be effective for Christ.

Third, verses 41 and 42 show that the prophet of God rebuked Ahab. God had told Ahab to destroy Benhadad because of his sinful actions against the nation of Israel. Instead, Ahab had made a covenant with Benhadad and allowed him to go free. The prophet was faithful in telling Ahab what God had told him to say to Ahab. Instead of listening to the prophet of God, Ahab showed no repentance when the prophet rebuked him. In contrast, we need to repent when we have sinned. In Luke 17:3, we see that Christ gives us as Christians a three-part instruction regarding rebuke. That verse says, "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him." If a Christian sins against us, we are to rebuke him, give him an opportunity to repent and then forgive him if he repents.

Fourth, verse 43 shows that Ahab became sullen and resentful when the prophet told him what God had said. People, that are busy satisfying themselves, do not like to hear when the Word of God is shared with them. Ahab developed the attitudes that eventually lead to bitterness.

Fifth, verse 43 shows that Ahab became displeased, because he did not get his way. Ahab was busy, but he was busy trying to get his own way, instead of doing what God had commanded him to do. As a result, he became displeased when he did not get his own way. Today, we see that even many Christians can become displeased when they do not get their own way.

Sixth, verses 39 and 40 show that Ahab pronounced his own judgment. In verse 39, the prophet had said that the specified judgment had been a life for a life. In verse 40, Ahab said that the judgment of a life for a life should be carried out exactly as the prophet had mentioned. He did not realize that he was pronouncing his own judgment.

First, in contrast to Ahab, Christ shows us how we can be effective and finish the work that Christ has given us to do. First, in John 17:4, we read, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." Here, we see that Christ chose to glorify the Father in all that He did. Since Christ has called us to follow His example, we will be effective if we make it our goal to glorify the Father in all that we do.

Second, we see that Christ was effective, because He finished the work that the Father had given Him to do. Since this statement was made before His crucifixion, this makes it clear that His work was to equip the men that would carry on His work when He returned to heaven. We will be effective if we will develop the replacements that will carry on the work Christ has given us to do when He takes us to heaven at death.

Third, we see that Christ shared with the disciples what the Father had told Him to share. John 17:8 says, "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me." Here, we see that we will be effective if we share the Word of God, instead of sharing our own words with those that the Lord has given us to lead.

Fourth, we see that Christ prayed that the Father would keep the disciples from the evil one. John 17:15 says, "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one." Here, we see that one of the things that we want to teach developing leaders is the importance of praying regularly for those that they will be leading. We do this by our own example as we pray regularly for those that we are leading. As they hear us pray for them, they will begin to realize the importance of praying regularly for those that they lead.

Fifth, we see that Christ prayed for unity both among the disciples and us. John 17:20-23 says, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." Christ knew that the unity of the body would be a great part of the impact of that body on the world around it. Just as Christ prayed for unity among Christians, we also need to follow the example of Christ and pray for unity among Christians.

Sixth, Christ saw the disciples reproduce themselves. In Acts 2:41-42, we read, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." The disciples knew how their lives had been transformed as they spent time with Christ. As a result, they immediately began to spend time with the new believers and do the same things that Christ had done with them.

The disciples knew that they would help the new believers become effective if they spent time with them sharing the Word of God. They knew that the new believers would become effective as they spent time fellowshiping with one another as they shared the Word of God together. The disciples realized the importance of helping the new believers to learn to pray just as Christ showed them how to pray.

The disciples also realized the importance of eating together and remembering the Lord's death as they shared communion together with their meals, so that is mentioned in both verse 42 and verse 46. Acts 2:46 says, "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart." Christ had shared many meals with the disciples. They realized the many lessons that He had taught them as they were eating together. John 13 through 15 provides a good example. As a result, they helped the new believers see the importance of sharing meals together.

We see that the disciples became effective just as Christ was effective. Acts 6:7 says, "Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith." Here, we see that the disciples were effective and the number of disciples multiplied greatly, because the disciples of Christ did the same things Christ did to finish His work. Acts 9:31 adds, "Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied." Here, we see that the disciples had followed the example of Christ and reproduced leaders that had developed other leaders and churches. Their ministry had also been effective.

Today, we will also be effective if we show developing leaders how to reproduce their lives in the lives of others. May the Lord richly bless you as you follow the example of Christ and the disciples by helping developing leaders learn how to reproduce their lives in the lives of the next generation of spiritual leaders.

Self Serving Individuals or Serving Shepherds

In Ezekiel 34, God spoke through Ezekiel to describe the self-serving leaders of Israel and to describe what His ministry would be as the faithful shepherd. We will see, these verses teach us two very different attitudes about spiritual leadership. As we develop spiritual leaders, we want to develop leaders that have the attitudes that are the attitudes that God said Christ would demonstrate.

We will begin by looking at the attitudes of the faithless leaders that Ezekiel described. Ezekiel 34:3-4 says, “You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.” These verses teach us several things about the attitudes that godly leaders will avoid.

First, we see that the focus of the self-serving leaders was to satisfy their own needs. The passage shows three things they were doing to satisfy themselves, “You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings.” These verses show that their primary concern was to please themselves and get what they wanted. They were not concerned for the people that they were supposed to be shepherding.

Second, the self-serving shepherds were not feeding the flock. Here, we see that they had no concern for the spiritual growth of the people for whom they were responsible. There was no effort to teach the people the Word of God. They were not helping the people to understand what the Word meant. They were not helping the people to apply the Word of God to their own lives.

Third, the self-serving shepherds were not strengthening the diseased or weak. Disease or weakness can be the result of false teaching or just a lack of help in spiritual growth. Instead of protecting people from false teaching or helping those that were weak, the self-serving shepherds did nothing to help them.

Fourth, the self-serving shepherds were not healing those that were sick. Here, we see that the self-serving shepherds had no concern to help others become healthy followers of the Lord. Instead, they left them in their weak and unhealthy state. There was no concern to minister to either their physical or spiritual needs.

Fifth, the self-serving shepherds were not binding up the broken. Many times people are broken or crushed by the things that happen in their lives. The self-serving shepherds were doing nothing to minister to those who had been broken by the things that they had experienced in their lives. Instead of serving those with spiritual or emotional needs, they left them to suffer without help or encouragement.

Sixth, the self-serving shepherds were not bringing back those that were driven away. The word that is translated “driven away” speaks of “*those that have been driven or chased away.*” A self-serving shepherd is one who drives people away by his words or his actions. Such a person is one that only thinks about how to get what he wants for himself. That person will make no effort to restore fellowship with those that have been driven away.

Seventh, the self-serving shepherds were not seeking the lost. Here, we see that self-serving shepherds have no concern to reach out to those that do not know God. Christ says that we are to preach the Gospel to every creature. These self-serving shepherds were so busy seeking to get what they wanted for themselves, they had no concern to reach out to those who do not know God.

Eighth, the self-serving shepherds were ruling with force and cruelty. Instead of serving those they were leading, the self-serving shepherds ruled them with harshness and cruelty. Spiritual leaders that drive people with this attitude are totally controlled by their own desires. They do not care how many others they destroy to get what they want for themselves.

In contrast, Ezekiel 34:11, 15-16 summarize the attitudes that Christ had as the Good Shepherd that gave His life for the sheep. Those verses say, "For thus says the Lord God: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out...I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord God. I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment." In these verses, we see that Christ shows us the attitudes and actions of a faithful spiritual leader.

First, Christ said that He came to seek and to save those that are lost. Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Christ gave us an example of the fact that a godly shepherd will seek those who are lost in their sin. The concern of Christ is that all will come to repentance. We will develop faithful spiritual leaders if we show them how to reach out effectively to those that have not yet placed their trust in Christ.

Second, Christ said He would feed His flock. Once people place their trust in Christ, His concern is that they will be fed. In John 21:17, Christ told Peter, "He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep.'" Peter probably thought of that event when he wrote in 1 Peter 5:2-3, "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." Christ makes it clear that spiritual leaders are to feed His sheep and be an example.

Third, Christ said He would cause His flock to lie down in a good fold. Christ also has a great concern for Christians to be a part of His body where they love one another. In John 10:16-17, Christ said, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again." Christ has taken Jews and Gentiles and made us one in the church. Christ also prayed in John 17, that we would all be one.

Fourth, Christ said He would bring back those that were driven away. People are sometimes driven away from the fellowship of a local church by the words and actions of others. Christ says that He will bring back those that are driven away. We are to follow His example and do whatever possible to help restore Christians to the fellowship of a local church. Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Fifth, Christ said He would bind up the broken. In Luke 4:18-19, Christ quoted from Isaiah 61 about His ministry to the broken. Those verses in Luke say, "'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'" Christ wants spiritual leaders to follow His example and minister to the brokenhearted.

Sixth, Christ said He would strengthen the sick. Christians are affected both by false teachers and by unconfessed sin in their own lives. We are to follow the example of Christ and strengthen those affected by false teaching by helping them learn to understand and apply the Word of God to their

lives. We are to help those affected by sinful living to restore their fellowship with the Lord by confessing and forsaking sin. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." We want Christians to understand that Christ both forgives and cleanses us of our sins.

Seventh, Christ said He would destroy those that were self-serving. Here, we see that Christ will destroy those that are self-serving shepherds. Romans 12:19 says, "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord." We see that we are to leave all judgment to Him and not try to take that to ourselves.

It is a great privilege to have the opportunity to help others learn to become serving shepherds that are following the example of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip others to serve Him.

The Pharisees Pattern of Separation or Christ's Pattern of Dwelling Among Us

A very significant statement is made in John 1:14 where we read, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The word that is translated "dwelt" is only used five times in the New Testament. The other four times are all in the book of Revelation and all talk about heaven. The basic thought is for a person to place his tent (human body or tabernacle) among us and live with us. This is one of many differences between Christ and the religious leaders of His day.

In contrast, the Pharisees and other religious leaders were very careful to keep themselves separate from the people around them that needed to know about spiritual life. The reason the Pharisees and other religious leaders kept themselves separate was because they had no spiritual life to give. They were trying to show that they were better than others by this very separation, because they had a religion rather than following Christ. Today, we will see the contrast between Christ and the religious leaders.

In Matthew 9:10-12, we read, "Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard that, He said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.'" The Pharisees kept themselves separate from the tax collectors and sinners because they had no concern for them. Christ chose to sit down and eat with the tax collectors and sinners, because He loved them and wanted them to know how to have their sins forgiven.

This same thing happened many other times. Luke 15:1-2 says, "Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.'" Here, we see that the tax collectors and sinners were eager to hear Christ, because He accepted them and helped them to understand how to have forgiveness of sins. The Pharisees and scribes just murmured. Christ responded with three parables: the parable of the lost sheep; the parable of the lost coin; and the parable of the lost sons.

The older son who refused to accept his sinful brother, showed the attitude of the Pharisees and scribes. We never read that he came into the feast that the Father had prepared. These parables were spoken very soon after the parable of the Great Supper in Luke 14:15-24. Luke 14:25 begins with "and" which shows that immediately after the parable of the Great Supper, Christ gave three parables about the cost of becoming His disciples. Luke 15:1 begins with the word "then" showing that these two chapters are connected. The tax collectors and sinners counted the cost and drew near to Christ. The Pharisees and scribes also counted the cost and murmured against Christ. That is why Christ gave the three parables in Luke 15, to show the response of the tax collectors and sinners by the three things that were lost and then found. Then, in the third parable, Christ showed the rejection of the Pharisees and scribes by the refusal of the older son to enter into the celebration dinner.

Christ gave another parable in the book of Luke to show how the Pharisees refused to accept the tax collectors. Luke 18:9-14 says, "Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'" And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Christ showed by this parable that the Pharisees despised others and so separated themselves from them.

In the very next verses, Christ showed the disciples by His example the importance of accepting young children and not separating Himself from them. Luke 18:15-17 says, “Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.’” Christ was teaching the disciples by His example the importance of dwelling among the children.

A few verses later, Christ showed the importance of dwelling among those with physical infirmities. Luke 18:38-43 tells about a blind man, “And he cried out, saying, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ He said, ‘Lord, that I may receive my sight.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.’ And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.” Christ took time to spend time with this man and meet his need after others rejected him.

Within minutes after Christ spent time dwelling with the blind man and healing him, Christ chose to dwell with Zacchaeus, the head tax collector in Jericho. Luke 19:5-7 says, “And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.’ So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, ‘He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.’” Christ chose to spend time in the house of Zacchaeus. Many others murmured, because they wanted to keep themselves separate from Zacchaeus.

Christ chose to dwell among sinners where they lived, worked and spent their free time and their lives were transformed as a result. Luke 19:8-10 says, “Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.’” Christ provided many examples of why we must choose to go to people where they live, work or spend their free time in order for them to hear how to have salvation and forgiveness of sins.

Today, many Christians have become like the Pharisees and other religious leaders. They have separated themselves from the very people that Christ has called us to reach. Such Christians will invite people to come to a church meeting that is held within the building where the church meets. However, they will not go to people where they live, work and spend their free time and dwell with them in a situation where those that are not Christians feel comfortable. One of the things Christ told His disciples after His resurrection in John 20:21 was, “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’” John 1:14 shows that the Father sent Christ to dwell among us and now Christ has sent us to dwell among those that need to know how to have forgiveness of sins.

In fact, Christ said this same thing in several different ways after His resurrection. Mark 16:15 says, “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’” Luke 24:45-48 says, “And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to

rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.” Matthew 28:18-20 says, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” Our commission is to go to others and not just tell them to come to us.

The final recorded words of Christ before He returned to heaven are given in Acts 1:8-9 where we read, “‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

Even persecution did not stop the disciples from dwelling among the people and sharing the Gospel. Acts 5:40-42 says, “And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” When persecution scattered the new disciples they also were dwelling among the people sharing the Gospel. Acts 8:4 says, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” May the Lord richly bless you as you show others how to dwell among those that do not know Christ by your example as you dwell among those without Christ and share the Gospel with them.

Saul's Pattern of Handling Failure or Christ's Pattern of Handling Failure

When people are leading others, there are times when those that they are leading fail. This is true both in the world and among Christians. Saul was the first king of Israel. One day he gave a command. 1 Samuel 14:24 says, "And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies.' So none of the people tasted food." Here, we see that even though they needed food the people obeyed Saul

However, Saul's son, Jonathan, did not hear the command. 1 Samuel 14:27 says, "But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened." The reason that Jonathan did not hear the command of his father was due to the fact that he was on the battlefield capturing a key position for Israel. Since he had not heard the command, Jonathan ate a little honey. Later, he was told about the command of his father.

Saul later made a rash statement to the people. 1 Samuel 14:39 says, "For as the Lord lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not a man among all the people answered him." Saul was ready to prove that he was in control even if it meant killing his own son.

Later, Saul chose to cast lots to find out who had sinned. When the lot pointed to Jonathan, 1 Samuel 14:43-45 says, "Then Saul said to Jonathan, 'Tell me what you have done.' And Jonathan told him, and said, 'I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand. So now I must die!' And Saul answered, 'God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan.' But the people said to Saul, 'Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! As the Lord lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.' So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die." Here, we see that Saul was ready to kill Jonathan because of his own rash vow. The people chose to protect Jonathan because they realized that the plan of Saul was totally wrong. In the process, Saul lost the respect of the people and greatly hurt his own leadership of the people.

In contrast to the way that Saul handled failure, we see that Christ handled the failures of His disciples in a totally different way. Instead of condemning them to death, Christ restored them and promised that they would continue to have an effective ministry in the future. We see that Christ demonstrated this forgiving and restoring attitude as He encouraged Peter, knowing that Peter was going to fail.

In Luke 22:31-34, Christ said to Peter, "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' But he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.' Then He said, 'I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.'" In these verses, we see that Christ predicted Peter would fail, but also promised that He would be restored and would have a future ministry.

First, we see why Christ said that Peter would fail. Verse 31 says, "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.'" Here, we see that Satan asked God for permission to test Peter. Of course we are familiar with the fact that Satan also asked for permission to do the same to Job in the Old Testament. Christ wants us to know that the desire of Satan is always to be allowed to test Christians and especially Christian leaders.

Second, we see that Christ had already prayed for Peter before Satan was even allowed to test Peter. Verse 32 says, “But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” Christ knew that Peter would deny Him three times that night. However, Christ also knew that those denials would not be an indication that the faith of Peter had failed. Instead, Christ knew that Peter was weak and would be deceived by temptation. In fact, Christ said to Peter and the other disciples in Luke 22:40, “When He came to the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’” Christ knew Peter would be tempted and would deny Him.

Third, we see that Christ knew that Peter would turn back to Him after he denied Christ three times that night. When Peter denied Christ the third time later that night, Luke 22:61-62 says, “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ So Peter went out and wept bitterly.” Even in Peter’s failure, Christ could look at him with a look of compassion because Christ had already warned Peter that he would deny him.

Fourth, we see that Christ promised ultimate victory to Peter even before Peter failed. (As we saw, verse 32 said, “and when you have returned to Me”. Christ warned Peter of what was coming as Satan sifted him.) However, Christ told Peter that He had prayed for Peter and that Peter would turn back to Him after this time of failure. Here, we see that Christ focused on the future restoration rather than the present failure.

Fifth, we see that Christ promised Peter that he would still have a ministry after this momentary present failure. The last phrase of verse 32 said, “and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” Here, we see that Peter was told that what he would do that night would teach him some very important lessons. One of those lessons, was the fact that other brothers also will need to be strengthened when they have a momentary time of failure. Christ assured Peter that what he would learn that night would equip him to help other Christians when they experienced momentary failure. He would be equipped to strengthen others when they went through similar times.

Sixth, although Peter knew what Christ said that night, we see that he still felt that the Lord could no longer use him because of his failure. In John 21:3, we read, “Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We are going with you also.’ They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.” Peter felt that he was such a failure that all he could do was return to his life of fishing. This was not just a momentary decision, because it would take him three or four days to travel from Jerusalem back to the Sea of Galilee to begin fishing again. According to John 21:1-3, at least six other disciples seemed to have that same sense of failure and also returned to fishing.

Seventh, Christ chose to go to Peter to restore him, rather than just let Peter live the rest of his life with a feeling of failure. Jesus even allowed Peter to fail to catch any fish before talking to him. However, John 21:4-6 says, “But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Children, have you any food?’ They answered Him, ‘No.’ And He said to them, ‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.’ So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.” Christ showed Peter and the others that they could not even catch fish any more in their own strength but that He could do great things when He worked through their lives.

Eighth, Christ fed the disciples and ate with them before even talking to Peter. Christ gives us a good example of how to restore a weaker brother by His example. Christ just spent time with Peter and the others to let them know that He accepted them in spite of what had happened the night of His crucifixion. In fact, a meal together provides an ideal time to restore a Christian that is feeling like he or she has failed.

Ninth, Christ asked Peter if he really preferred to spend the rest of his life fishing instead of serving Christ. John 21:15 says, “So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’” Since there were 153 fish they had just caught, Christ gently asked Peter whether he loved the fish more than he loved Christ. Even though Peter was afraid, after his three denials, to use the same word for love that Christ used and so used a less powerful word to let Christ know that he loved him, Christ told him to feed His lambs.

Tenth, since Peter had denied Christ three times, Christ repeated the question, “Do you love me?” three times. Each time, Peter answered yes and each time Christ told him it was time to get back to serving the Lord. If we read 1 Peter 5, when Peter was writing to fellow elders many years later, the words that he used in that chapter may indicate he was thinking of this very event as he wrote. Peter was restored and just a few weeks later preached the sermon recorded in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost.

Some might choose to follow Saul’s pattern for handling failure. However, Christ certainly gives us an example of the way that He wants us to restore Christians after they have experienced a time of failure. May the Lord richly bless you as you follow the example of Christ and restore developing spiritual leaders after they have demonstrated weakness in their lives.

Buying Power Like Simon or Serving in the Power of Christ

Many leaders in the world today think that they can use their money to buy power. Such people can often buy power in business or government. Unfortunately some religious leaders follow the example of people in the world and try to buy spiritual power. Since Christ gives us all things freely, the only person that sells spiritual power is Satan and he gives people power to steal, to kill and to destroy. At the same time, he is in the process of destroying those who are trying to buy spiritual power. We will meet one such person in our study today.

In Acts 8:18-23, we read, “And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.’” Here, we see that Simon thought that he could buy spiritual power.

To understand his thinking, we need to understand his past. Acts 8:9-11 says, “But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, ‘This man is the great power of God.’ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.” Simon had practiced witchcraft among the people of Samaria for many years.

We see that while he was practicing witchcraft there were several characteristics in his life. He had been able to astonish the people. He claimed to be a great person. He was able to control the people. He had been able to make the people think that his power came from God. He had been able to control and hold power over the people for many years. Here, we see a man that had deceived the people. Acts 8:13 says, “Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.” Here, we see that he even professed to become a Christian, because he was amazed by the power of God. That is what caused him to want to buy spiritual power.

Simon saw this as an opportunity to buy greater power so that he would be able to exercise even greater power and control over the people. Simon was ready to pay to buy that power. Peter told him that the gift of God could not be purchased with money. Peter also told him that his heart was not right with God. Peter told him he needed to repent of his wickedness. Peter told him that he needed to pray and ask God to forgive him the thought of his heart. Peter told him that he was filled with bitterness. Peter told him he was in bondage to sin. Simon shows us that there are people that claim to be spiritual leaders that think and act like the world, instead of thinking and acting like Christ.

In contrast, Luke 4:14-15 says, “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.” Here, we see that Christ carried out His ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. His concern was to teach the people instead of trying to control the people. One of the best ways to control people, is to keep them ignorant of the Word of God. One of the best ways to serve and empower Christians, is to teach them the Word of God and show them how to apply it in their daily lives. Then they are also able to serve others effectively.

In Romans 15:18-19, we read, “For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient--in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” Here, we see that Paul had learned to serve Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. This produced several results. He was able to be an example by his words. He was able to be an example by his actions. He was able to show the Gentiles how to be obedient to the Lord. He was able to preach the Gospel wherever he went.

Romans 6 gives us three key words to help us learn how to serve in the power of the Holy Spirit. First, Romans 6:8-10 says, “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.” We are to **know** that we died with Christ and that we live with Him. Since death has no more control over Him, Christ lives to serve God.

Second, Romans 6:11 says, “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The word **reckon** is an accounting word and means *to put something to our account*. Here, we see we are dead to sin and life in Christ has been put to our account. The fact that we are dead to sin means that we no longer are under the control of the sinful desires of the flesh. The fact that we live with Christ and death no longer has control over us means that we also have been given the power to live to God.

Third, Romans 6:13, 16 says, “And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God...Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?” The word **present** or **yield** means *to place our lives under the control of something*. If we place ourselves under the control of sin, we will live a miserable sinful life. If we place ourselves under the control of God, He is able to give us the power to obey the Word of God so that we are able to live a righteous life and serve in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 7:14-25 tells us what will happen if we depend on ourselves as Christians. Since we are powerless in our own strength, we are actually placing our lives under the control of sin when we depend on ourselves. Romans 7:18-20 says, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” As Christians, when we depend on our own strength, we have a desire to do good, but we do not have the power to do good. We plan to do good and then do not do it. We plan to avoid evil, but we end up doing evil anyway.

We realize that we are living almost the same way we lived before we became Christians. There is just one difference. Now we have a desire to do good, but we do not have the power to do good in our own strength. Romans 7:24 summarizes how we think and feel when we depend on our own strength. That verse says, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” Here, we see that a Christian that is depending on his own strength has constant inner conflicts in his thoughts.

In the first seven chapters of Romans, the Holy Spirit is mentioned only once and chapter seven concludes with this terrible inner conflict. In contrast, chapter eight mentions the Holy Spirit nineteen times. We saw that Christ served in the power of the Holy Spirit. At each moment we are yielding our lives to God, we can serve in the power of the Holy Spirit. His Spirit gives us the power to obey God and be obedient to the things that He commands in His Word.

In chapter 7, we see that the Christian who depends on his own strength has constant inner conflicts. In contrast, the Christian that is learning to yield the control to the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit has a completely different view of life. Romans 8:35-37 says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Here, we see that Christians have a choice. We can either live wretched miserable lives, or we can be more than conquerors that are motivated by the love of Christ.

As we have the opportunity to help spiritual leaders develop, one of the things that we help them realize is that they have choices. They can be worldly leaders, like Simon, who desire power and become controlled by bitterness. They can be spiritual leaders who depend on their own strength and experience tremendous failure and inner conflict. They can make the choice to present their lives to God so that they serve Him in the power of the Holy Spirit and experience what it is like to have lives that can be described as being more than conquerors regardless of what they face. May the Lord richly bless you, as you show godly leaders how to serve the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.