

Building a Sustainable Leadership Life

Lesson 5: Vibrant walk with Christ

Hey, John Finkelde here. Welcome to Lesson 5 on Building a Sustainable Leadership Life. I hope you're enjoying this roadmap that will show you how to sustain over the long haul of many decades of Christian leadership.

Lesson 5 I'm going to focus on a vibrant walk with Christ. Now this may seem like Christianity 101 but trust me I've walked with a lot of Christian leaders, including pastors, and discovered that a vibrant walk with Christ, even though it's necessary, vital and important - no one diminishes the importance of it, the truth is that a lot of Christian leaders actually neglect this primary foundational aspect of their Christian life.

It is pivotal for leaders

I am convinced that a fresh and vibrant spiritual life or walk with Christ is pivotal for leaders, absolutely essential, it's vital.

I think the temptation can be for leaders to only pray, to only get into the Scriptures when they've got a meeting on, when they've got a sermon on, when they've got a small group discussion, when they have to present an offering talk or a communion talk. The temptation is to just become a professional reader of the Bible, a professional prayer that you go to a prayer meeting but never get alone with Christ. Never have time just meditating and musing in the word and in His presence and in prayer and personal devotional worship.

One of the interesting things that I've discovered in researching pastors who have fallen morally is that one of the recurring aspects of their leadership life is that they have neglected the area of personal prayer, personal Bible reading and study. They've moved away from that one on one walk with Christ and become a professional reader of the Bible, a professional prayer in prayer meetings and in public arenas but they've stopped setting aside private time to seek the Lord, to get into the Scriptures.

Therefore becoming spiritually weak on the inside and far more open to temptations of the flesh. Temptations to immorality, temptations to drinking, temptations to drugs, temptation with finance, in other areas and for some people it's been the shipwreck of their life.

So I think this is a key area. Not because of what we're just afraid of, and temptation we'll fall into, but to actually recognise you know what, I am a Christian leader. I'm not just a leader. I'm a Christian leader and walking with Christ is a vital part of being a Christian leader.

My devotional habits

My devotional habits that I've formed over 40+ years of walking with Jesus generally work around private personal time with the Lord. For me it's in the morning. My time is best in the morning to pray and get into the Scriptures. It's not good for me doing it at night, it just doesn't work for me.

My place, I have a chair within my study and over the years I've had a little area that I've set aside within our home where I've been able to sit and walk and talk with the Lord and get into the Scriptures. Generally I'll do that 5-6 mornings a week. I'll have a break on my day off, if you like, where my walk with the Lord will be far more informal and relaxed than that sort of scenario, and sometimes on a Saturday I'll go ok, yeah I'm just cruising today as well.

Sunday morning my focus is generally around what I'm going to preach, so prayer and prep is around that. But on the other days of the week I'm reading the Bible for my own benefit. I'm not reading and studying to get a sermon.

Now if you're a bi-vocational pastor, I do recommend that you use your devotional time to meditate on the Scriptures you're going to be preaching. Not so you become just a professional Bible reader but the reality of time is that you're not going to get a lot of time to meditate as if you were a full-time pastor. So therefore you've got to mix it up which I think is totally fine.

Now I'm not legalistic how I run my devotional habits. Sometimes it's 10 minutes, sometimes it's an hour. It will vary from day to day and where I'm at and what I'm doing. I think it's important to make sure you don't have this I've ticked that box now God has to bless me, sort of spirit and attitude. That won't do you any good at all.

What are your devotional habits?

So what are your devotional habits? Do you have a devotional life that's 3 times a week, 5 minutes each time?

If you're a pastor leading other people or a Christian leader in a place of responsibility in a church, I would suggest to you that is not enough. I think you need to have time with the Lord that's solid. I'm not talking about an hour every day or something that's locked down like that. But you need to have time where you're sitting with the Lord for a good 20 minutes, 30 minutes and at times an hour. Waiting upon Him, seeking His face, worshipping, studying the Scripture, and filling your inner world with that walk with Christ. I think it's so vital and so important.

Next steps

Prayer journal

Why don't you start a prayer journal? Put into the prayer journal things that you write, you may want to use it through Evernote, a digital ap, or you may want to use a book. Write down the names of people you're going to pray for. Your family, your friends, people in your church. Write down projects and goals. Any area that needs the intervention of God.

Put it into your prayer journal and pray through that at least once a week. Pray solidly through that once a week. Commit those things to the Lord in writing, I think it will make a difference to your prayer life. I've had a prayer journal for years and it really helps me focus in prayer.

YouVersion Project 345

Why don't you use YouVersion Project 345? YouVersion's Project 345 is basically designed to get you through the New Testament in one year. There are 260 chapters in the New Testament, there are 260 Monday to Friday's in a year. So there you go! You read a chapter a day, 5 days a week. You fall behind, you catch up on Saturday and Sunday and you get the New Testament done in a year.

I did this a couple of years ago. I loved it! It was fantastic. I'd never been able to ready the Bible in a year - I could never do it! But try some of YouVersion's Project 345 if you need to restart and rekick your Bible study and your Bible reading.

So there you have it. You will not build a sustainable Christian leadership life without a vibrant walk with Christ. Do some resetting on that if you need to and enjoy walking with Jesus. God bless you.