

Tools for Wise Leadership

A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

Series 10: The Leadership Style of Jesus

Talk 16: Dealing with Ego Problems

Welcome to the programme **Tools for Wise Leadership**. We have so far discussed various important aspects of leadership style of Jesus. In the last program we focused on Jesus as a forgiving leader. Today we are asking the question of how Jesus dealt with the ego problem that affects so many leaders today.

This issue is actually linked with the issue of forgiveness and the handling of anger. We become hurt when a tender part of our lives has been touched by the actions of others. This might be our sense of inferiority, our fear of looking foolish, our feeling of inadequacy about our jobs etc. The hurt is therefore pointing to areas we need to work on. Jesus, on the other hand, had an assured sense of identity. That must be why other people's negative actions did not devastate him. But let a person who already has an inferiority complex be even slightly insulted and he will fly off the handle and go into a self-defensive rage. If that happens you know there is an ego problem there.

Another manifestation of an ego problem is pride. From my many years of observing life I have become convinced that pride is a means of protecting a fragile ego. That pride can be expressed through boasting. Unfortunately that then creates a relational problem with others. Who wants to associate with a boastful person who always thinks he is better than other people? Philippians 2:3-4 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves."

How very different from many leaders who are driven by their egos. When they do not receive special recognition they become disappointed and angry. But Jesus never got upset when people did not recognize him. Neither did Jesus depend on titles for his success. Instead he let his work speak for itself and he let his audience discover his identity by themselves.

Today many people have sought fame through well publicized miracles and so-called prophetic powers. They claim to produce miracle money and miracle babies. Whenever they perform healing miracles they ensure that there is a full glare of publicity with these miracles beamed on cable television channels. Even though they mention the name of Jesus it is their own image that is projected. It is them, rather than Jesus, who have become famous. It is also them, rather than God, who get the glory.

How does this behaviour by modern day prophets and miracle workers compare to the style of Jesus? Jesus performed miracles out of love, and never out of a desire for publicity or self-glory. He refused to perform miracles for self-benefit. For example, at the beginning of his ministry Jesus was tempted to produce miracle bread out of a stone and he refused. He also refused to perform a publicity stunt of falling from the parapet of the temple in order for people to see him being caught by angels before falling to the ground.

When Jesus performed miracles of love he often forbade publicity. One good example of this is found in Mark 7 where Jesus healed a man who was deaf and dumb. For modern day miracle workers this would have been a good story for television publicity. But not for Jesus. It says in verse 36 "Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it." You see it was the beneficiaries who found it difficult to stay quiet when they had

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been overwhelmed by such love and goodness. It was not Jesus who craved the publicity to boost his ego.

There is yet another issue associated with the problem of ego. It has to do with who gets the credit for work done. Some will only work, or give or help others in order to get the credit. I am sure you are as familiar as I am with government ministers who will not make a donation until the television crew has arrived in order to create maximum publicity for themselves. Well, the same attitude is practiced by many Christian leaders in more subtle ways. They forget Jesus' teaching concerning doing things for recognition or just to boost egos. In Matt 6:1-4 Jesus gives us the following teaching:

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

The bottom line here is that those who do good only in order to get the credit would of course receive their reward on earth and God no more has a need to reward them. Blessed are those who will do the work without caring who gets the credit, for God will surely reward them.

Now of course credit may come anyway without us specifically seeking for it and this is not a bad thing. But good leaders who receive such credit will quickly want to share such credit with those who have helped them to accomplish the task. When accepting recognition for their achievements, such leaders carefully add, "but I couldn't have done this without the help of so and so."

Here is an example. Some people have told me how much they have benefited from listening to these talks on tools for wise leadership. But my listeners must know that I have myself been inspired by other people through what they have said or written. For example this very series on the leadership style of Jesus was very much inspired by Michael Youssef whom I met at the Haggai Institute training in Hawaii in 1986. He gave me a book that he had written bearing that very title of the leadership style of Jesus. That book resonated with my understanding of Scripture and observations of life. So while preparing this presentation I have written an email to Michael Youssef to share with him the credit for this series that he has helped inspire me to present.

The problem of the ego goes even to the extent of leaders undermining others in an attempt to boost their own egos. I have a PHD which just recognizes academic achievement. But like I have said before PHD now also stands for "Pull Him down" or "Pull her down". Yet the true mark of leadership is when we build others up rather than pulling them down. We must not see other leaders as our competitors for the limelight but our co-workers in God's vineyard. Isn't it amazing that Jesus would say to his disciples that they would do greater works than he did? That is a Build them Up mentality, not the PHD one. As a secure leader Jesus had no fear of others outshining him. Leaders who are secure in Jesus Christ have nothing to lose and therefore have no need for the PHD.

In summary what have been saying then? Well, simply that to be like Jesus we must deal with the big temptation to leadership called the EGO. That means we need to be humble, to build others up rather than pull them down, and to be motivated by the need to complete God's task rather than to seek for personal glory. That way we would be following the leadership style of Jesus, and that is the best tool for wise leadership. So until we meet in the next programme, stay blessed.

Discussion Questions

The series the *Leadership Style of Jesus* is drawing to a close. This is the last episode of the series. We hope you are making good use of the three discussion questions for ***Tools for Wise Leadership***:

Study Question 1: for Personal reflection

What does this episode mean to you personally as a leader?

Study Question 2: for Group Discussion

What does this topic mean you as a group of leaders?

Study Question 3: for applying the topic

What can you apply from this topic in your role as a leader?

For this episode we provide you with the discussion questions for the **Talk 16 - Dealing with Ego Problems**

Study Question 1: Personal reflection

Can you recount a leadership situation where your ego got the better of you?

Study Question 2: Group Discussion

Throughout the world, how has the pride of many leaders impoverished their subordinates?

Study Question 3: Applying the topic

What measures can you take to overcome your leadership ego?

Young leaders will appreciate to read your feedback to the interaction on

www.facebook.com/ToolsforWiseLeadership

You are welcome to write your personal questions to us via SMS or Whatsapp to +27 60 362 4163.

Please write to us at leadership@twr.org

Resources are available on www.twr360.org/programs/116/tools-for-wise-leadership on the web and on the mobile app of **TWR360** for Android or iOS devices.

Remember to continue listening for the next series as Tools for Wise Leadership continues to provide you with biblical leadership skills.
