

Our culture is full of leadership seminars and leadership books, all designed to help you become the leader you want to be. I have never seen a follower book or seminar. Why is this, when followers will outnumber leaders, and no matter what kind of a leader you are, you spend way more time in your life under authority than in authority. From the bible's perspective, learning to be a good follower precedes learning leadership, for the simple fact that every leader must still be under a higher authority if he is to avoid being a tyrant. So, let's spend some time this week honing our following skills.

## **Day 1**

### **Understand Command Intent**

In order to be a good follower, you must always understand the intent of the commands that you are given. If you bristle at the idea of being given commands, you probably fail to understand the intent. Being commanded is the prerequisite of being in a hierarchy, and being in a hierarchy is the prerequisite to finding meaning and value in your life. The Psalmist surely didn't see commands as bad in Psalm 119, or in any other Psalm for that matter. Command intent is important because unless you understand what the command is intending to achieve, you cannot make the adjustments necessary when the unexpected is encountered, which it always will be. I spent some time today working on removing a stubborn screw from the door closer at church, which of course turned into a bigger job. When the screw refused to come out, further steps had to be taken. The limits of those steps came from the fact that installing a working door closer was the intent behind getting the old screw out, meaning that destroying the metal the screw was attached to was not an option. When you understand intent, you make the minor adjustments that develop discernment and wisdom on a micro scale, and that prepares you eventually for leadership. Without learning the lessons of followership, leadership will remain elusive, and without understanding command intent, you will fail to learn the lessons of followership. What are God's commands to you, and why did He give them? What are your bosses' commands to you, and why are they given? Learn to see more than the command, and learn to understand how and why the hierarchy functions, then you will be prepared for greater responsibility.

Verses: John 8:12, Mark 8:34, John 10:4

Prayer Topics: Purpose, Aim, Submission

## **Day 2**

### **Adopt the Authorities Goals**

Because every command has an intent, a will that functions behind the scenes with greater goals and desires than what are contained in the command, it is possible to obey the command without adopting the goal. If I am told to water the grass, for example, I can do that without wishing the grass to grow, which is the command intent. I might, in fact, wish the grass not to grow because I do not want the work of cutting it, adding to my work load, and giving me another item on my to-do list. Failing to adopt the goals of the authority will stunt my development and make me a bad follower, for the simple fact that the authority wishes the grass to grow and for the landscaping to be beautiful, fruitful, and productive and I do not, preferring to wish for a smaller workload. My goals and the authorities' goals are now in conflict, meaning I am serving two masters. I will never develop the necessary skills and character to rise in my level of responsibility, and I will always resent the authority that is over me because I will see it as a challenge to my real authority, my own wishes. Many times, we fail to progress in our careers or our faith because God's goals are for the flourishing of His kingdom and our goals are for our own comfort and ease. My unwillingness to pay the price or to value the goals of the authority make me a rebel even as I follow the command I am given, meaning I can never truly enjoy and celebrate carrying out the

command, so that my work is always toilsome to me, being part of the curse given to Adam. When you find yourself under authority, make their goals your goals and find joy in your work.

Verses: Romans 13:1, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 2:18-20

Prayer Topics: Attitude, Humility, Peace

### **Day 3**

#### **Make Your Best Effort**

The next step in being a good follower is to make our best effort. Understanding command intent and making the authorities goals our goals, will clear the way for us to put our whole heart, mind, and strength into our task. Many times, we are called on by the authorities in our lives to do something we do not wish to do. Challenging our hearts with the first two days' advice will help us to arrive at the place where we desire the right things, but now we must put our whole hearts into carrying out the command. Do we do our very best? Does our work show proper planning, good preparation, careful analysis, and craftsmanship in execution? Have we covered all the contingencies, and finished by cleaning up properly and putting everything back in its place? Look around at your work and your life. Does it show your best effort? If not, why not? What areas can you do a better job? What will the results be of doing a better job? What growth will be made in you and your character if you do a better job? How will it affect those around you? Will it provide the pathway to more responsibility? Are there consistent holes in your effort? What can that teach you about you? About how you think about authority? About command intent and sharing goals? About where your heart and treasure are? Spend some time today in evaluation and make the changes that need to be made.

Verses: Ecclesiastes 9:10, 2 Peter 1:5-10, Romans 14:19

Prayer Topics: Energy, Joy, Strength

### **Day 4**

#### **Become an Expert**

It is one thing to do our best, it is another thing to be an expert. One is doing your best at your current level of skill and understanding, the other is to expand your level of skill and understanding so that when you do your best the results are even better. To truly become a good follower, we need to invest the time to become experts in the areas of responsibility we have been given. Doing our best is the first step, but it is far from the last step. If we share in the goals of the authority that is over us, we will want our efforts to be as effective as possible in achieving those goals. That means we will spare no effort at making our efforts as efficient and forceful as possible, taking classes, learning from others, and expanding our knowledge. We will practice in our free time, we will listen to instruction, and we will be humble enough to admit our areas of weakness. In our information age, expertise is more available than at any other time. The barriers to achieving greatness in your field have never been lower. Take the time, put in the effort to become truly great at the level you find yourself at, and you may find that in being faithful with little, you will be given much. In what areas can you achieve expertise? What will it take to get there? How will you begin?

Verses: Matthew 5:48, Proverbs 22:29, Proverbs 12:24

Prayer Topics: Mastery, Skill, Glory

### **Day 5**

## **Accept Rebuke**

Finally, if we want to be good followers, we must learn to accept rebuke. This is very difficult for most of us, as our pride tends to bristle at the idea of service in the first place. The reality is, however, that all of us will find ourselves needing to be put right by those who have authority over us. Accepting rebuke means accepting admonishment for lack of success in execution, lack of expertise, or lack of desire. It means not only listening to the rebuke, but also really trying to understand it and apply it. It means maintaining the desire to be better over time, taking concrete steps to improve, and having your attempts at improvement evaluated and criticized. Accepting rebuke means ultimately being thankful for the opportunity to be put on the right track, to be glad to be made more effective at achieving the goals of the authority who is over you, and to desire the greatest impact possible in moving the hierarchy forward. If you find yourself facing rebuke, be glad, for greater achievement is ahead of you.

Verses: Revelation 3:19, Proverbs 1:23, Luke 17:3-4

Prayer Topics: Discipline, Criticism, Punishment