

The Secret to Success

“For David . . . served his own generation
by the will of God”
(Acts 13:36).

Would you like to be important? Would you like to be a leader in God’s kingdom? There is a secret to success in the kingdom of God. Surprisingly, it does not involve people serving you and meeting your needs. It does not involve you being treated like a “big man” and every one else like “little people.” In worldly leadership, the big question is “Who is number one?” The emphasis is on position, titles, power, and the offices held. In the world, leadership involves a quest for power. For this reason Satan was brought down. He wanted power. (See Isaiah 14:12-15.)

It should not be that way in the church. There it involves picking up a towel and washing the feet of others. Leadership in God’s kingdom involves serving others, instead of being served.

“And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all” (Mark 10:44).

Jesus said, “I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:27).

When looking for the leader, do not look for the one with all the titles but look for the one with the servant’s heart. When you find him, you find God’s leader.

The Leader’s Prayer

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,

which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

Lord,

I am Your servant.

Place me wherever I can be of most service
to You, with the talents and abilities You
have given me.

I am Your living sacrifice. You alone are the
boss. You are in control!

Let me see clearly (vision); hear and sense
Your will; and walk uprightly in the footsteps
You have for me.

I want to be in constant touch with You
(prayer). Help me to keep my priorities
correct; love You; love my spouse and family;
to love and have a burden for my world.

Yours truly;

Kofi

As we remain on the altar of sacrifice, committed to the Lord, He will put us in the place we can best be used for His glory.

“Life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned to me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about God’s mighty kindness and love” (Acts 20:24, *LB*).

**“The people who make the difference
are not the ones with the credentials,
but the ones with the concern.”
(Max Lucado)**

Jesus Christ is the greatest leader of all times. He was successful because He fulfilled His purpose in life. He knew the reason why He was born, and He accomplished the will of God. He stated His life’s purpose in Matthew

16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

In order for us to be successful, we must know the purpose for which we were born. God has given each of us a unique role in His kingdom, and we must find it. Everyone in God's kingdom is saved in order to do something for Him. God has a place for everyone to work in His church.

Jesus went about doing good (Acts 10:38). He did not come to be served, but He came to serve. When we serve others, we are actually serving the Lord.

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

We can minister to the Lord in many ways, but each way involves serving people.

"And ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

There is a popular saying in Christian circles. It asks, "What would Jesus do?" (WWJD) We do not serve others for our sake, but for Jesus' sake. We try to do what Jesus would do, and do it the way that He would do it, while giving all the credit to Him. We serve Jesus by serving people. A leader achieves true success by serving others.

The thinking of the world is to get ahead, be served by others, and climb to the top as

quickly as possible—even if it means walking over others to get there.

It has rightly been said, "Be careful whom you kick on the way up. You may need that person on the way back down."

The outstanding leaders in the Bible began their ministries as servants. Moses was tending Jethro's flock when God called him to bring the Israelites out of bondage. David, a shepherd boy, was called from the field when Samuel visited Jesse's house to anoint the new king of Israel. Joshua began his ministry as a servant and assistant to Moses. Elisha served Elijah long before he received a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Timothy was a servant and a son to the Apostle Paul, taking care of many of his needs. Philip, the evangelist, began his ministry waiting on tables. (See Acts 6.)

Principles of Success

Here are several noteworthy principles.

1. God calls busy people.

Barnabas and Saul were serving others when God called them to be missionaries. They received this call through prayer, fasting and faithful service to God and others.

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

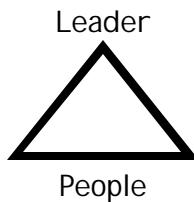
2. To be used of God, one must first be a servant.

3. To be successful, one must first be faithful.

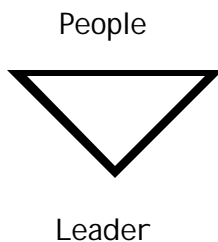
4. Servant leaders produce servant leaders.

In the book *Primary Purpose* the author, Ted Haggard has an excellent chapter on "Becoming a Servant." Leadership is usually viewed from the standpoint of a group of people serving a smaller group of people called "leaders." People involve themselves in a "power struggle" to get to the top. The author of *Primary Purpose* presents two different leadership triangles.

The first is the "World's View of Leadership" and shows the leader at the top of the triangle and the people under the leader's control at the bottom.

World's View of Leadership

He then presents the "Biblical View of Leadership" with the top of the triangle pointing downward. The people to be served by the leader are at the top and the leader is at the bottom.

Biblical View of Leadership

To be great in the kingdom of God, you must serve others. He shows that the whole basis of what we do is so that we can serve others.

Parable of the Talents

A man traveling to a far country called his servants and delivered his goods to them. He gave one five talents, another two talents, and the last one talent, according to their different abilities. When the man returned, he called his servants. He asked what they had done with their talents. The one with five talents had traded and gained five other talents. The one with two talents gained two. However, the man with the one talent hid his in the ground. Perhaps, he brought the coin wrapped in a cloth and said, "Master, I didn't gain anything. I didn't lose anything either." The master was pleased with the first two men, but angry at the third. To the first two he gave the Bible's definition of success. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (Matthew 25:21).

The man who had not invested his talent, lost it. Here is an important principle about God-given talents. When we fail to use them, we tend to lose them. God's gifts and callings are without repentance. But we can allow them to become dormant and inactive in our lives. We should live to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Look at God's mathematics.

1. The man with one talent lost it.

$$1 + 0 = 0$$

2. The man with two talents gained two more.

$$2 + 2 = 4$$

3. The man with the five talents gained how many more?

5 + 5 = 11

How did this happen? The master took the talent that the man had failed to use and gave it to the successful man.

God has given each of us talents, abilities, and a ministry. When we faithfully use these blessings from God, then God gives us more. Not only that, but He puts us in a place where they can be of the most benefit and blessing to others. Be faithful with what God has given to you, and He will give you more. That is the secret to success.

A valuable leader does not require a position to achieve personal success. (He will accomplish it with or without a position.) However, an organization may need him in a position to help achieve organizational success.

Study Questions

- 1. In worldly leadership, where is the emphasis placed?

- 2. Leadership in God's kingdom involves what?

- 3. What should we look for in a leader?

- 4. Why was Jesus a successful leader?

- 5. How did many of the outstanding leaders in the Bible begin their ministry?

6. What principles can we learn from this?

7. Draw two triangles representing the "World's View of Leadership" and the "Biblical View of Leadership." (Use the space provided.)

World's View of Leadership

Biblical View of Leadership

- 8. What is the biblical definition of success?

- 9. The man with five talents gained how many? _____