

BECOMING THE LEADER YOU WERE MEANT TO BE

Today we are going to talk about a completely different aspect of being a Christian. We are going to talk about becoming the leader you were meant to be. Not everyone is born a leader. Some people are.

They just naturally take off and lead people. Some people stay in the background. If you can ever get them to the front, they make tremendous leaders because they are quiet and diplomatic, easy with people.

It does not matter about your personality. There are people God wants you to lead. You might say, "I don't have any desire to be a leader." If you are a mother in a family, you are going to have to lead your children and God can teach you how to do a good job of it. If you are a man at work, and you have people who work for you, you can be hard on them, cruel and disinterested, or you can be a good leader.

God wants to show you how. God wants to teach you how to help your husband be a good leader. Let's look at what Jesus says about how to do it.

The first thing Jesus says is do not get caught up in a heavy burden of doing it. When you are working for the Lord, if you are not careful, the job can overwhelm you. It can just take all of the life out of you. You are exhausted and burned out. What happened? You did not know how to walk in the power of the Spirit in it. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you have love, joy, peace. You know the Word, you are hungry for the Word, and you can use all of that to help you. You can change people's lives right where you are. You do not have to be going to some big ministry around the world or some ministry here in the United States, or some ministry in your country. You can be a tremendous leader affecting many, many lives, right where you are. In fact, let's say you work in a restaurant and you wash the dishes in the restaurant. You might think, "I am the lowest person on the totem pole here." Let me tell you, if you follow these characteristics of what a leader is, people will notice you and they will pay attention to what you say because what you say carries weight.

In Matthew 11:30 Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and My burdens are light. Take it upon you and learn how I did it." Jesus was the greatest leader that ever lived. All of time is measured by his birth and death. Isn't that amazing? Calendars are set by His life. How could one person living in a very tiny country, in a day and age where there were no newspapers, no internet, no computer, no e-mail, no CNN, no Fox News, nothing, be so influential? How can that be? It is because He had leadership and He had the anointing of the Lord on doing what He was doing.

Let's talk about what you need to know as a leader if God has called you to do something. In 1992 I was called to be the head of a women's ministry in a church that already had 6,000 people going there. I have been a leader all my life, but I have never been the "top banana" as we call it in the United States. I had always been in partnership with my husband leading something or I had been underneath the person who was leading, helping them, but I had never been given a job leading where I was the one responsible. If anything went wrong, it stopped here and I had to handle it. I had never done anything like that. I said, "Lord, how can I do this? I don't know what to do. Help. What do I do?" It began to occur to me to ask God to give me these things. I want you to write these things down.

First, ask God to give you a vision of what He wants done. I am not necessarily talking about a supernatural vision from the Holy Spirit. I am just talking about putting your head where you need to take this group. Where is it out there that they need to end up? Where are they now and where do they need to end up? Give me a vision of where you want us to go.

Next, ask God to show you the purpose of this ministry. Do you know what it was for dealing with women in a women's ministry? God showed me. The purpose of it was to give women a place to have fellowship with one another. It was a place to help women speak into each other's lives. It was a place to develop unity. It was a place to help women develop their gifts and their talents and their abilities. That was the purpose of doing it.

Then God taught me to ask, "What goals do You want me to accomplish?" When you set goals, you have them in various areas. What goals do you want me to set? I heard in my heart and my mind, "The first year do this. Second year do this." God gave me a five year plan. He spelled it out, "By the fifth year be doing this." I followed it and it worked. It was very successful because it was God's. The yoke was easy, the burden was light. I am not saying it did not have hard times. It had some hard times. In fact, there would be times I would go in my office, close the door, put my head down on the desk, and pray in tongues because I could not even think of what to pray in English. I was so frustrated, so I just prayed in

languages because I could not even think of what to pray in English. I was so frustrated, so I just prayed in the Spirit. I relaxed and then I knew what to do because that interpretation comes to you. Do not be afraid of that. It is an asset. It can be one of your greatest weapons against the devil. After I asked for goals, I said, "Lord, would You give me creative ideas of how to do what You have asked me to do?" At the time, I did not think I was a very creative person. Maybe you do not think you are, but God is. Look around you. Have you ever seen anyone this creative in your life? One of my favorite things to do is look at bugs on the ground and to notice all of the colors in bugs. I just think what creativity. Who even cares about the colors of bugs? God does. He will give you fresh, new creative ideas that no one has done, and the people will love it. Ask God to do that.

The last thing to do is to ask God to confirm it in His Word somewhere that He is calling you for this task. Why do you do that? Because when you have gone through the hard stuff and you want to give up and quit, you cannot quit if the Lord has not told you to quit. You need that verse to hang onto. When I asked the Lord, "If You want me to do this, give me a word out of the Bible that I can stand on," guess which one He gave me. "Who knows but what you have been called for such a time as this" in the book of Esther. It just hit my spirit one day. When God is talking to you, it just will not go away. It just stays there. That verse just stayed in my heart, in my spirit and in my mind for a couple of days. I knew, "I don't know what God is doing but for such as this He needs me." I did the job for about seven years. I really thought when I started that I was going to do it for two years. Then He gave me that five year plan so I did that. Then at the very end, we became a cell church. We had to change everything and dismantle everything and become a cell church. I had to stay on two more years and do that.

I want to go over these things again. Ask God to give you a vision of what He wants done. Ask Him to give you the purpose of why you are doing it. Ask God to give you goals He wants you to accomplish. Ask Him to give you creative ideas for doing it. Then, ask Him to confirm it in the Word. When you do that, you have a clear definition of what you are doing. Do that with your leaders. You cannot do something big by yourself. It is not possible. You have to become a good delegator. People wear out because they say, "I don't want to ask anyone to do it. No one can do it like I want it done. If I ask them and they don't know how to do it, I have to wait until they go through the process and make all the mistakes." You had to, so let them. Ease up. You are going to get there.

You want to develop people into leaders. When you leave a position, you want to have someone developed and ready to take it over. You do not want to leave and have everyone saying, "What are we going to do?" Have someone coming along with you where you are mentoring them and training them. When you do that, no matter how many leaders you have, no matter how many jobs you have for them to do, have them do the same thing. Sit down with them and say, "If you are going to work in this ministry, I want you to know for sure that God has called you, that you are doing it for God and not for me. Then, when you get discouraged you will not quit. When you get offended, you will not quit. You will hang in there. I want you to do these things. I want you to write them on paper, spend a week or two with God, then come back and give me the piece of paper." I had about 30 people do that for me. It really helped. We moved as a team.

When you have a meeting with your leaders always give them the vision again. You have to have that vision kind of short. You have to be able to say, "We are going to go around the world speaking and training leaders. We are going to go around the world ministering to the poor. We are going to work in this church and do this. We are going to work in this business and accomplish this." Every time you meet, find some way to cast that vision out in front of them again so that they know we are all on the same page going the same way. As you go along with these people through the year, sit down with them again and go over these things. You need to say, "What are you learning? How is it going? How can I help you?"

One of the main qualities of a leader is that they are a visionary. You do not have to be one to be a leader. I would say most leaders are visionaries. I know that I am. Sometimes I get an idea and I can see how we can take it to the moon and ask God for the steps. It helps to have that visionary in you. You know God has called you to be a leader and so anything you are lacking, ask Him to give it to you. One of my favorite verses of the Bible is, "In your weakness I am made strong." I have served the Lord for 35 years with all of my heart, 100 percent, going down the road as fast as I could go. As you go along, you see your weaknesses, your failings, where you need to grow. I promise you one of my favorite things is to say, "Lord, I am weak here. Strengthen me." You know what the Lord does? He makes that one of your strongest qualities. He delights in doing that because it brings Him glory.

A leader has to be able to keep things told to them in confidence. Many people will come to you. They feel comfortable with you and like they can be open with you. You have to be so careful not to tell what you just heard. Learn to be a reservoir, not a river. In other words, gossip and good stories come through and just go right on to other people, or gossip and heartache comes to you and you should keep it there. Most of the time it is heartache. You are not called to bear the burden. Remember, "My yoke is easy."

That is the job you are called to do. "My burden is light." That is what it takes to get the job done. When

that is the job you are called to do. My burden is light. That is what it takes to get the job done. When people tell you these things, get alone and say, "Lord, I cannot handle this. I cast it on you. Here it is. Here is the problem. Help them God." You need to be very committed to the group and to have risen up through the ladder yourself. God may have told you His dream for your life. I can tell you that you start small. If you are faithful there and you learn what you need to learn there, He moves you to the next one. I have been serving the Lord for 35 years and have a large ministry where I go around the world speaking. I have been doing that since 1996. I went to the former Soviet Union 11 times over eight years training women to be leaders. I took other women leaders with me. They were women that I raised up to be leaders and become the leaders they were meant to be. Then we went to another country and trained people. Now I am doing the same thing in Africa. Did I start out like that? No. Could I have handled it? Absolutely not. I started out teaching a Sunday School class to little junior high girls. Then I started teaching high school kids, boys and girls. Then I was teaching college kids, and then single adults. Then my husband and I taught single adults. I progressed to a small women's group, then a working women's group, and then in 1992 I went to a 6,000 member church. Every step of the way, it stretched me. I wondered, "Can I do it? I hope I can do a good job. God, You are going to have to help me." Looking back I could think, "Teaching that single's group was nothing." But it was big at the time. Now God has me on television teaching you, and I do not even know you. I have love in my heart for you because I can feel it. The love of God is shed abroad and it is for you. He wants you to become the leader you are meant to be. You can do it. Just get started.

As one of God's leaders, you have to know God's Word and His principles. Do not make the mistake of people who say, "I don't really read the Bible very much. Yes I have this job, but I am not in the Word that much." Are you kidding? How are you going to know God and how are you going to know what God wants if you do not read the Bible all the time. You say, "I am so busy. I don't have time." Make a commitment to read it five minutes a day. Actually 15 minutes a day on any subject will make you an expert in five years. Spend time with God and you will know God's ways and you will become a great leader, but you cannot do it without that. His principles will guide you, but you have to know His principles. In order to be a leader, you need a proven walk with God. The Bible says to be real careful about taking a new believer and putting them in a place of responsibility. Do not do it. Why is that? You might think, "I have the talent, I have the ability. Put me up there. I love Jesus." You have to have a proven walk with God because you are not used to fighting the devil. The more you move up in leadership, the harder he works to stop you in all kinds of ways. He tries to deceive you, to trip you up, to depress you, to cause you worry. The devil will do whatever it takes to stop you. You have to have a proven walk with God to be a leader with God. He has to know, "I have tested you and found you faithful. I can use you." Pass those tests. They are going to come, just like school. How do you know if you should go to the next grade if you do not pass the test.

The ability to stay calm in stressful situations is another thing you need. Once I was in Belarus and someone had given me \$10,000 to set up a women's conference of government leaders, civic leaders and church leaders. Women were coming in by train from all over the country. Everything was going great. At 6:00 o'clock the night before the conference started, I got a phone call. The Russian lady who was my counterpart said, "We are not going to be able to have the conference." I said, "What?" She said, "The Minister of Religion has shut it down. He said he is going to put a lock on the door and we cannot do it." I asked her, "Why?" She said, "He thinks it is a religious thing, and as you know, in communist country you can't do that and Belarus is still a lot that way. They don't want it going on." I told her, "We have all of these women coming. What are we going to do?" It was very scary. I remember walking down the hall of the hotel thinking, "I have six or eight women with me. They have trusted me to come with me. Are we going to be put in jail or something? What is going to happen? Lord, You have to help me know what to do." It was amazing the calmness I felt. As I walked down that hall I was thinking, "I always wondered what it would be like if you got put in jail for God. I am amazingly calm." I met with the leader of one denomination, the Baptist. I met with the leader of the Pentecostals. I met with a missionary who had a big ministry there. We sat in my hotel room trying to decide what to do. Everything had just fallen apart. Everyone in the room was calm. You learn how to be calm in crisis through growing in leadership. The Lord told us what to do, and it worked out. We were not a part of it. We had to pull out. They had the conference without us and they did it probably better than we could have done. What did it do? It united those Belarusian women. They began to see, "I am a Baptist and the women in the Russian Orthodox church love God just like I do. I am an Orthodox and the Catholics love God just like I do." It united the women. God took a bad situation, kept everyone calm, and there was great success.

You will always have to have someone over you to whom you are accountable. They can see what you cannot see. They can help you get corrected. You need to be teachable and correctable. Are you? Or do you get real defensive? Maybe you say, "I know, I know." That is defensiveness. How about this, "Yeah, but. . . Yeah, but. . . I know, but. . ." That is not teachable and correctable. No one likes to be corrected. People try to do it in a nice way. You cannot grow if you do not get corrected. Also, you need a strong marriage if you are leading women. You do not need someone who is right next to divorce because the pressure is too great.

What else do you need? You have to be a team player. You have to learn how to work with a team.

There are going to be people who can do a job better than you ever thought about doing it, so be a team player. Work as a team. Delegate that responsibility.

You have to pray earnestly over people. You have to be able to pray for your people. You have to be able to multiply yourself. You have to be able to give recognition and honor. Have you heard this saying? "There is no telling how far you can rise if you do not care who gets the credit. There is no telling how successful a project can be if you do not care who gets the credit." If your heart is really right with God, you do not care. God is going to take care of you. He says, "Humble yourself and I will exalt you." You do not have to worry about that. God will take care of you. He is going to do it all. His burden is light, His yoke is easy. You want to finish strong.

I want to talk to you about how to set goals so that your life stays balanced. Do you ever see people who are so ministry heavy they do not have a family life? Do you see people that are so involved in their family that they do not help other people and they do not get much done? I want to talk to you about setting goals so that your life can continue with the Lord for many, many years, staying in balance. You need to set goals in five areas: Spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and financial. Do people really set goals? This is going to shock you. A study was done at Harvard and 87% of all people have no goals and dreams. They just go through life with the idea that whatever happens today that is the way I go. They just go through life thinking life is boring, life is drudgery, and life is hard. Ten per cent of all people have thought about what they wanted, their goals and dreams. Three per cent have written them down on paper. The three per cent that have written them down achieve 50 to 100 times more than the ones who have only thought about them, not even considering the ones who did not have any. Are your goals written down, your spiritual goals? What do you want? It has to be something you can check off. What do you want spiritually for yourself? What do you want in your family? What are your family goals? What are your emotional goals? What are your mental goals? One of mine is I want to speak five languages. If you do not reach a goal one year, move it up to the next year and the next year. "Coqua savout, mina savout Betty Swann. Coqutula." If you are Russian you know what I just said. You can learn languages; you can reach your goals. But if you do not write them down, you are not going to reach them. You might reach a few, but would you rather be one of those people who achieve 50 to 100 times more? You can. It can happen to anyone, even if you are a child. If you are watching this show and you are 12 years old, get out a piece of paper and write down your goals for this year.

I want to remind you of something. God loves you and cares about you. He wants to help you. God wants to have an intimate relationship with you where He talks to you and you talk to Him. You tell Him your dreams and He tells you His dreams for you. He develops you. He wants you to become the leader you were meant to be. It is there. I want to pray for you right now. You are probably sitting there saying "I wish someone was praying for me. I need help in this area."

"Jesus I know you love people and I know you care about people. I know you care about every single person watching this. Father, I pray every person watching this knows for sure that they have been born again. Then I pray every person that is watching this show right now knows how to be filled with the Holy Spirit, how to move, how to go toward you, God, and then knows what the plan is to be a leader. Thank you God."

QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. What biblical principal about leadership do we learn from Matthew 11:28-30
2. What five questions should you ask of God when you are considering a leadership role?
3. What qualities are important to develop when you are a leader?
4. Why is it important to set goals?
5. What areas should we set goals in?
6. How are you in a leadership role?
7. How are you seeking God's to help you in this role?

To watch the video on BECOMING THE LEADER YOU WERE MEANT TO BE, Pillar Six, Leadership Skills, go to www.bettyswann.com.

