

TWIN TOWERS OF LEADERSHIP



When it comes to the qualities that comprise good leadership, there is no end of lists. Some are long (too long) and some are short (too short). Some are very complicated and hard to understand and others are very simple and easy to understand. Whatever is on your list should be anchored in the grace of Jesus Christ or it is just words with no power.

If you are an NBA fan you undoubtedly know of the "twin towers" of the San Antonio spurs, David Robinson and Tim Duncan. They are giants and protect the basket by keeping the "enemy" away from the net. They are quite formidable, to say the least.

I would like to suggest a very, very short list of two essential qualities for a Christian leader, or any leader for that matter. I think many of the desirable character qualities in a leader will find their root in these two.

These TWIN TOWERS will also keep the "enemy" out that might cause our leadership to plateau, get temporarily sidelined, or bomb altogether. The TWIN TOWERS I am thinking of are: TEACHABILITY and INTEGRITY. The value of these two qualities was brought home to me in the book, *In Your Hands*, by Phil Geldart.

Teachability

I believe that teachability is the willingness to change. It is much more than, and different from, the desire to learn. I know lots of learners who know tons, but they are not teachable. What we are talking about here goes well beyond reading, studying, listening, or taking copious notes. It is absorbing with the intent to apply and change. I used to think that what was important was being "a life-long learner," but I have recently come to understand that I could learn all my life but seldom truly desire change.

Let's face it. Who besides a wet baby really wants change? How many seminar and conference notebooks are collecting dust on my shelf with no application in my life? Genuine teachability is a process of receiving information, understanding it and acting on it. One old sage expressed it well when he said, "When all is said and done, a lot more is said than done." Teachability means I desire to grow and change. I am motivated to grow and change. I, for one, am more determined than ever to go beyond learning to being truly teachable.

Integrity

Chuck Colson was once asked what the top three qualifications were for leadership. He replied, "Integrity, integrity, and integrity. If there ever was a time when men and women needed to model integrity in their leadership roles, it is today -- now!"

Let's expand our concept of the word "integrity." Traditionally, integrity has been understood to mean doing what you said you would do when you said you would do it. Making good on your promise. Being a person of your word. In the context of being teachable, it is following through with what has been taught or understood. This includes commitments one makes to people (including self) and principles. It is the car right after the engine of teachability.

If a leader is genuinely teachable, then we know he **wants** change. If that same leader has integrity we know he **will** change. Both are foundationally crucial to having credibility, which no leader can do without and continue to have followers.

Let's take a hypothetical example, demonstrating the difference between just being a learner as opposed to being teachable (wanting to change) and having integrity (committed to change). Pastor Bill reads everything out there. He always wants to know what you are learning. He grills you for any new ideas you may have. He always asks good questions, but he personally applies little, if anything, of what he is getting.

He is an "idea pack rat," a "knowledge junkie." He always attends the latest seminar, reads the hot selling books, soaks up the fresh ideas, but it never gets from his head to his hands and feet and becomes action resulting in life change. **I would say that Bill is a learner, but possesses neither a teachable spirit nor has integrity.** Over the years, I have met lots of leaders like Bill.

Jesus spoke to this issue in John 13:12-17. After washing the disciple's feet, He asked them if they understood (learning). They assured Him that they did. In verse 14,15 He states rather emphatically that they need to now act. He then goes further on (in verse 17) to drive the point home by telling them that real joy in life is found not merely in learning, but in being teachable (willing to apply and change) and demonstrating integrity by acting on what was understood.

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