

Become a Follow Leader

Trust Your Authorities

This isn't easy to do—I know from experience. *“Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.”* (Prov.19:20-21) There are times when those appointed over you give instruction that is not received well. Wisdom is not born of a few days of success, but is built of many days of success and failure. *“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”* (Rms.13:1)

Listening Builds Trust

As a leader of God's church, I've learned a lot about the need for patience. In the early days, I was filled with doubt and struggled to know how to lead a ministry and provide direction. I would sit with my pastor and other mentors and they would listen and patiently guide me. I didn't always like their suggestions and some of their ideas simply didn't work for the assignment at the time, but they always honestly listened to me and they prayed for me. That helped me to trust their guidance.

This is a lesson that I've put to use in my leadership. When people disagree with a decision I've made, I don't try to win an argument. I have learned the importance of truly hearing their objections and concerns. Even if I could persuade someone of my opinion with clear and compelling reasons, patience and listening has a way of softening people's hearts. There have been times that I have asked those who disagreed with a decision that I made to simply trust me.

Use Challenges to Serve and Love

Life is full of challenges; both spiritual and natural. How we handle these challenges determines the depth and breadth of our trust in God. Paul used his challenge of the “thorn” to focus on the sufficiency of God's grace. Many who have had a similar crisis have failed because of focusing on the issue at hand, rather than use it to see something greater. As Christian leaders, Jesus' example to His disciples was His determination to do “the Father's will.” Through persecution and eventually crucifixion, His will was “Father” focused, rather than “Son” focused. “Nevertheless, at Thy will.”

Following Precedes Leading

Christian discipleship is all about following. As disciples of Jesus, we are all followers first and foremost. Following first is a lesson that extends throughout life. Children learn to follow God by obeying their parents. Apprentices learn a craft by mimicking a master. In the church we learn to lead by following our elders and pastors and overseers. There's a practical payoff as well. Not everyone is a natural leader. Some of us learned to lead by following. Become a good follower. It's not an easy thing to do. But in the long run it will make you a wiser leader, one that others will be glad to follow.