

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

In an edition of *Tabletalk Magazine*, entitled “Leadership,” Burk Parsons wrote: “We have entered a new era of modern history. This era is marked by a gaping void of leadership, but also by antipathy toward the very notion of leadership. What’s more, there is a growing trend that celebrates self-appointed leaders who have demonstrated a lack of integrity and to ignore and dishonor faithful, aged leaders whose integrity has been proven over the course of decades. Leaders of courage and conviction are despised, and leaders of compromise and concession are idolized. We now live in a world that applauds Chamberlains and mocks Churchills. If this were true only in the world, it would perhaps be more bearable, but sadly it is also true in the church and in the home.”¹

The words of Parsons are timely in a post-modern world where there is a downturn in spiritual leadership. There is an interdependent relationship between leadership and spiritual formation. Both necessitate continuous change. The meaning of spiritual formation, according to Pettit, implies “that God is in the business of forming us into His likeness so that we can have deeper fellowship”² with Him. God does not form us to be inwardly focused but focused upon fellowship and community. Spiritual formation, on the one hand, involves personal change, while leadership involves group or organizational change with the requirement of personal change. The most critical element and condition of the interdependent relationship is the spiritual transformation of the leader.

“And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking.” Mark 10-37-38

Servant leadership is a biblical concept, though the disciples had a difficult time relating. Toward the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus’ discourse with the sons of Zebedee, James, and John, would point to a common argument that is a reverberation in our time. Though Jesus draws the disciple's attention to the self-centered leadership of Gentile political leaders of that day, He challenges His disciples to be different— “be servant leaders!” In Jesus’ view, the leader is to be like a servant whose inner motivation is to serve others, not leadership that is motivated by personalized power or benefit. The passion of the servant leader is not focused on individualized power, reputation, perks, or privilege, rather on the execution of Godly purpose and on the well-being of those being led.

“But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.” Mark 10:43b-44

Close to servant leadership is calling or vocation. When life is lived with an understanding that it has purpose and meaning, then the everyday becomes holy. Then, there is primary and functional calling. Primary calling is one living a dynamic relationship with God,

¹ “Faithful Servants,” *Tabletalk*, June 13, 2019, <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2017/11/faithful-servants/>

² Pettit, Paul. *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: a Community Approach to Becoming like Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Kregel Publications, a division of Kregel, Inc., 2008: 180

whereas the functional call is how one behaves as a believer living out this calling. Believers are different from the world in this respect. We are called to God first and foremost, not just to a career, location, or role. The scriptural perspective of God's primary interest in the believer's life is based on who you are, not what you do. The world's viewpoint is usually based on employment or marriage when one speaks of the call of God or the will of God. The New Testament perspective of calling is always focused on salvation and sanctification. Pettit said, "God wants you to seek him, not just his services. God wants your heart."³

Primary calling is "living sacrifice" and does not change, but in contrast, functional calling changes as we move through the many stages of life. Even through these changes, your primary call does not change. Spiritual formation within the life of the believer reveals that our lives reflect God's intention. The sovereignty of God aligns the believer to His will and the believer is justified by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified." Romans 8:29-30

God is not man's way to the means of his end.

³ Pettit, Paul. Foundations of Spiritual Formation: a Community Approach to Becoming like Christ. Grand Rapids, MI.: Kregel Publications, a division of Kregel, Inc., 2008: 200