

The Dirty Dozen: Stumbling Blocks to Good Christian Leadership

Written by admin

Wednesday, 27 February 2013 09:04 - Last Updated Wednesday, 27 February 2013 09:32

by Sheldon Bass



"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23-24)

The Dirty Dozen Stumbling Blocks to Good Christian Leadership:

- 1) Sin (Unrepentant)
- 2) Personal Agenda's
- 3) Pride
- 4) Lack of Integrity
- 5) Under Poor Leadership
- 6) Priorities Out of Order
- 7) Low Self Esteem
- 8) Viewing an assignment as rank or privilege rather than responsibility
- 9) Fear of delegating responsibility and authority

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- 10) Lack of Skills or Knowledge
- 11) No Accountability
- 12) Outside God's Will

We have lots of good Christian Leaders today, and we want to keep it that way. As spiritual leaders, whether filling a role at Church, a Ministry, Christian business or simply having others look to us for guidance, it is our responsibility to continuously examine our hearts in the light of Christ's glory.

The order of this list in no way indicates the severity of negative outcomes. When I thought of trying to prioritize these stumbling-blocks, I found that there can be mitigating as well as mitigating circumstances with each one, which precludes ranking them in any particular order. We must also recognize that this is not an all inclusive list. There are indeed more hazards out there. Yet these are the ones the Lord laid on my heart. The following is a few brief observations on each item.

#1. SIN

Rather obvious is the first listed and it covers a broad spectrum of ailments to effective Christian leadership. This result stands the test of God's word. Any Christian, though redeemed and sealed unto the day of redemption, can be out of fellowship with God. Any time we have sin in our lives as His children, we must confess and repent. Joyously, we have forgiveness in Christ, we are under grace, and under the flood of His blood, shed in love and grace. However, a sin that we are aware of, and we have not turned from, or confessed, puts us out of fellowship, out of His favor and floundering on our own, having access only to our own intellect and abilities, rather than the Spirit's power. It will strongly hinder our ability to effectively lead.

#2. Secret Agendas--Ulterior Motives

Oh how thoroughly the devil studies us, so that he may deceive. He's been at it a long time and is really good at what he does. When I took an honest look at my own actions, I found one area where I was using my position for my own personal promotion, and I had been completely unaware I was doing it. It was just a little thing, and others said it was quite acceptable. But it wasn't in line with God's will for me. It was self promoting, which grows out of pride.

There is nothing wrong with wanting to get ahead and to be respected and sometimes others will nearly force us (or so it will seem) to stand up and blow our own horn, but what does God's word say? "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." And, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may lift you up (exalt you) in due time."

There are many ways that we can abuse the position God has given us. A good self test is to ask ourselves honestly; "Why am I doing this? Am I making this decision for selfish reasons or based on how I will appear to others? What do I have to gain? And is that the reason I'm doing things in this manner?"

#3. Pride

Though touched on in the previous listed stumbling block, sinful pride can take many forms and be disguised in various ways, usually manifesting itself through false humility. Meaning we find ourselves looking for ways to reveal to others, the humility we think resides within us. Yet if we have to seek ways to get others to notice, either they are responding to us out of pride, or

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it's the other way around. If it's them, we don't need to worry about it. God will handle that. If however that monkey is on our back, self evaluation in the light of God's Word, in His presence, is the key to overcoming. There is no clearer view of self than in the light of Christ's holiness, by whose glory we always fall short, and discover more compartments of our hearts to surrender to Him for transformation.

#4. Integrity/Honesty

Appointing a leader without integrity is like a proverb in the mouth of a fool. It just falls flat. Without the living picture of truth being displayed through the everyday lives of our leaders, we tend to seek other and better leadership, and for good cause. Honesty is vital for every Christian, so for a Christian leader it is doubly so. We must remain above reproach, though some poor leaders prove to be barely above a roach. (Yeah, that's an old one, but I still like it). Every leader must undergo close and careful scrutiny, and there will be times when people really want to find some kind of dirt in our lives. And no matter how innocent we may be, we will still be accused of wrong doing. Praise God that Jesus is the Judge and not those people. If you have been falsely accused, I encourage you to take it to the supreme judge of the universe and ask for vindication. The mud slingers will be caught with that muck all over them. It might take some time, but hang in there, help is on the way.

#5. Under Poor Leadership

I've been there. Excuse my grammar, but it ain't fun! In fact it can be a living hell to have someone over us who doesn't know how to lead, or has some of the other listed problems in their own life. We cannot rise, because someone over us is keeping us down, pinning their deficiencies on our vest, or is undermining the effectiveness of the entire organization. What do we do? We could go over their head, but that may come back to bite us. Most Churches and companies don't like to see you breaking the chain of command and you could lose their trust. As a last resort we can always cut our losses and find a solid mentor and leader to work with, in another position. But then, maybe God has put you in your present position to teach your leader, through your humble submission. You can love, forgive, and reverse lead them by example. Have you ever thought of that? I didn't, until God opened my eyes to His mysterious working in this way. I didn't like it much at all. Yet when I started seeing a change in the other guy, I had to scratch my head. Go figure, God's ways are mysterious. Not only so, but I found myself growing in my own spiritual maturity; learning greater patience; gut wrenching, groveling humility (ouch), and finding deeper peace that's only available in those gut twisting experiences of life.

#6. Priorities

First things first--Brilliant right? We might say, "D'oh, I know," yet how many times do we find ourselves fretting over the wrong things? How about placing a higher degree of importance on something than what it is due?

Time management is a big issue these days. Complete seminars are hosted to get employers and their workers streamlined and working efficiently. I've learned that every month or so, I need to re-evaluate where I'm at, in juxtaposition with where I want to be. What was crucially important last month, may have moved down the ladder in urgency this month.

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"Goal Mapping" is a great tool to help us stay on the cutting edge when it comes to what I need to do first, and how much time I should spend on each item in my to-do list. We should already have our goals laid out; our major objective and the smaller steps we need to take to get there. Having a visual map is near imperative for efficient use of our time, as well as in delegating responsibilities.

#7. Low Self Esteem

"I can't," never could do much of anything. We must have the self confidence and belief in ourselves that, first; I am important in God's overall plan. Secondly, we may look back and find that no one is following us, because we never believed in ourselves as a leader, so why should anyone else? Yes, humility is very imperative. Yet, we must have faith that with God all things are possible. Remember what Jesus did with the five loaves and two fish? He fed a crowd of well over 5000 people. Whatever our little is, God can take it and create big, fantastic results with it. We simply need to put it into His capable hands, and give Him the glory for the results. Besides, someone else believed you were capable, or you would not be in a position of leadership.

#8. Me Big--You Little

What a destructive mind-set this is. Not only do we cut everyone else off at the knees, making their contributions less effective, but we completely sabotage our own leadership abilities. A position of power or authority has been bestowed upon us, how? By the Grace of God! If I get all big headed about being over you in rank, how am I supposed to lead you? I'm too caught up in my own greatness to help anybody else. Yet when I view my position as a humbling honor, bestowed by the grace of God, I realize the great responsibility that is now mine. If I view my assignment as rank and authority, rather than as responsibility, I will fail in performing what I am responsible to do. A good leader creates good leaders. I should be bringing those under my leadership up to where I am, equipping them for greater successes. In so doing, I advance the cause of Christ and He advances me. Besides, I can't live the royal law of love by trying to keep everyone else down, or by putting myself first.

#9. F-F-Fear

Destructive in all of its forms, fear is a real wrench in the cogs. This ties in to our last blockade to success for leaders, as it too is a pride issue, but can also be a sense of inferiority. Someone beneath me is looking better than me. That should not frighten us; rather it should motivate us to greater climbs ourselves, to greater effort, and more prayer. Fear of delegation is all too common. If you are not daily seeking God's leadership in your work, you have good cause to fear. I once had a leader over me, who gave me jobs to do, yet refused to give along with the responsibility: the needed authority to get it done. He sabotaged my efforts, thus, he failed in getting done what he was supposed to. If I can't trust someone with the authority to carry out a particular assignment, I don't assign it to them! If I am trying to undermine their work and make them look bad, what does that make me look like? "Perfect love casts out all fear."-- "Live in Love, Lead in Love"

#10. I don't know what I'm doing!

I almost did not include this one, but then I thought maybe someone out there just might benefit. I cannot give advice for situations that are all different from each other. Each case must

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be weighed individually. If a leader is in a role in which they do not have the necessary skills or knowledge to perform their duties, I'd say be honest. But wait a while before saying you feel this way. Maybe God will lead you to learn what you need quickly. Remember the old adage, "Fake it till ya make it"? That's okay for the very short term. But if you see you are hindering progress, hurting the organization, don't do that.

#11. No Accountability

Some control freaks will attempt to create an ecclesiastical hierarchy and become detached from their role as a leader and instead begin to rule. If you have someone who is directly over you, who is not being held accountable to anyone or anything, RUN! A dictatorship only works when Christ is the dictator and no other man. We all need to be held accountable to another person or group of people. We need to hold ourselves accountable to be accountable. Sounds almost like a riddle, but it's rather simple. If we do not answer to anyone at all, that's called absolute power. "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely."

#12. Not Seeking God's Will

Many times we may find ourselves lost out there in the desert of life, not knowing how we got there, or the way back on track. But we can always find our way through Christ our Lord. It is so important for Christian Leaders to pray. It is just as important for us to pray for our leaders. Daily time, checking in with the Big Boss up-stairs is the key to staying on course through all the stormy ups and downs of Christian Leadership. Study the Bible and Pray, Pray, Pray.

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