

Practical Skills For Spiritual Leaders

Maintaining Your Spiritual
Commitment



Danger

- There is a danger that by being more organized, Apostolics might be less dependent on the Spirit.
 - Some have developed great talent, and then forsaken their commitment to Apostolic doctrine.
 - People can trust too much in their own organization.
 - The purpose of better organization is to be more effective.
 - Part of being more effective is being more effective spiritually.
 - It is, in fact, the most important part of being more effective.
- To be more effective spiritually, we must maintain our spiritual commitment.
 - We must be committed to spiritual leadership and Apostolic values.
 - We must be committed to Apostolic message and doctrine.

The Spiritual Benefits of Organization

- Spiritual people do benefit from being organized.
 - Goals are more clearly defined.
 - Through planning and organization, you are more realistic.
 - Your time is better spent.
 - Success is more likely.
 - Planning and organization help you manage risk.
 - You have greater confidence in yourself.
 - You will be better prepared for even bigger challenges.

Balancing Organization and Spiritual Sensitivity

- Organization and spiritual sensitivity are not mutually exclusive.
 - Developing a plan of action or a strategy is not sinful.
 - In fact, doing these things can improve your spiritual leadership.
- Keeping things balanced, though, requires a commitment to three things:
 - To pursue growth spiritually,
 - To maintain the essentials, and
 - To maintain our personal devotions.

Balancing Organization and Spiritual Sensitivity

- Growth makes us uncomfortable.
 - It involves risk.
 - Even spiritual growth can be risky.
 - We are talking about our souls.
 - But faith leaves us no choice.
 - If we have courage, we can grow spiritually.
- We should always strive to be more effective spiritually.

Balancing Organization and Spiritual Sensitivity

- We can, and must, maintain a commitment to core values:
 - Our vision
 - The Word
 - The lost
 - The Apostolic message
 - A separated life
 - Integrity
 - Humility
 - Anointing
 - The demonstration of the Holy Spirit

Balancing Organization and Spiritual Sensitivity

- We don't grow spiritually by replacing or abandoning the essentials.
 - Spiritual growth does not require abandoning these things; rather, it requires we sustain them.
 - There is no reason to abandon these things to be an organized person, or a strategic thinker.
- Nothing can replace personal devotion.
 - You cannot be spiritual without personal prayer and Bible reading.
 - Without them, no life has proper balance.
 - Spiritual growth isn't "managed". It requires spiritual guidance.

Balancing Organization and Spiritual Sensitivity

- Keeping things balanced requires that your personal motives be pure.
 - Your motive must be to do the will of God.
 - Guard against personal ambition and the desire for personal gain.
 - Selfishness and spirituality are incompatible.

Balancing Organization and Spiritual Sensitivity

- Your goal must be to be more effective spiritually.
 - That goal will help keep things balanced.
 - It requires that you take responsibility.
 - Improving organizational skills is a practical part of spiritual growth.
 - Practical skills can be of great spiritual benefit.
 - Planning, organization and strategy can improve spiritual effectiveness.
 - The purpose is to enhance the moving of the Holy Spirit (not replace it).
 - These skills help us fulfill our vision, increase our confidence in the effectiveness of the Holy Spirit in us, and improve our testimony.
 - If these things are true, planning and organization can make us more (not less) spiritually sensitive and responsive.
- This is a goal worth pursuing.

Maintain Your Values

- While learning to blend organization into your spiritual walk, there are foundational values that cannot be sacrificed:
 - Dependence on the Word of God
 - Commitment to the Great Commission
 - Commitment to the Apostolic message
 - Separation from sin and the world
 - Vision
 - Integrity
 - Humility
 - God's anointing
 - The demonstration of the Holy Spirit

Maintain Your Values

- To some, the concept of organization and planning is a different and perhaps frightening step.
 - It takes time to get comfortable with the concept.
 - It doesn't "feel" very spiritual.
 - You want to be sure your spiritual values are guarded.
 - The best way to safeguard your values is to strengthen your commitment to them beforehand.

Dependence on the Word of God

- To be approved of God, we must live in accordance with His Word (II Ti. 2:15).
 - Organization is not a substitute for the ministry of the Word.
 - Organized people are just as obligated to scriptural obedience as disorganized people..
 - Our love for Christ is proven through our obedience (Jn. 14:23).
 - The Word of God is our foundation.
 - It is a foundation that cannot be changed (Re. 22:18-19).

Commitment to the Great Commission

- We must have a passion for the lost.
 - Jesus commanded us to witness to the uttermost part of the earth (Ac. 1:8).
 - Every day could be the last (Jn. 4:35).
 - God desires for every soul to be saved (Ac. 17:30).
 - He sees every soul as a lost sheep (Mt. 18:14).
 - He expects us to have compassion for every soul (Mt. 18:10).
- We must be better organized to fulfill this commission.
 - We dare not replace it with any other.
 - We must commit to reaching the whole world with the message of Christ.

Commitment to the Apostolic Message

- The Apostolic imperative given at Pentecost is still true today (Ac. 2:38).
 - There is no other message.
 - We must identify with Christ alone.
 - It is His Spirit that reigns in our souls.
 - Nothing else will suffice.
 - There is no other name that can save (Ac. 4:12).

Commitment to the Apostolic Message

- There is no other faith (Ep. 4:4-6).
 - There is not one salvation for the Jews, and another for the Gentiles; there is one salvation for all.
 - The Church is not a blend of multiple faiths; it is the body of Christ, identified completely with Him.
- We dare not endorse other religions or doctrines; we must steadfastly adhere to the Apostolic message.

Commitment to the Apostolic Message

- We cannot be complacent about truth.
 - There is no other foundation (I Co. 3:11).
 - There is no sacrifice other than Calvary (He. 9:26-28).
 - No other act has any merit for our souls.
- 5. Some claim to have received new visions.
 - They have strategic visions that conflict with the Apostolic message.
 - If God gives you a vision, it will adhere with the Apostolic message.

Separation from Sin and the World

- God's people must separate themselves from the world (II Co. 6:17).
 - Separation is for the sake of moral purity.
 - It is not an excuse for spiritual arrogance.
 - The purpose is separation from sin, not the exclusion of sinners.
- To be ambassadors of the Gospel, we must be examples of moral purity and humility in the midst of a sinful world.

Separation from Sin and the World

- We are His peculiar people (I Pe. 2:9).
 - "Peculiar" comes from the Greek word PERIPOIESIS, meaning possession.
 - We are His possession,
 - We are identified as His, and
 - He has purchased us.
 - We are "peculiar" to Him.
 - The identification could be likened to certain plants and animals, which can only be found in one place.
- He is the vine; we are the branches (Jn. 15:5).
 - We only have life through Him.
 - We can do nothing without Him.

Vision

- Leadership isn't easy.
 - To maintain vision, we must persevere (Ga. 6:9).
 - Leadership requires stamina.
 - Sometimes it requires standing alone.
 - To lead means to be in front, leading in the quest for a vision.
 - When others become discouraged, the leader must press on.
 - It requires courage.

Vision

- To accomplish great things, we must strive for them (I Co. 9:24).
 - Paul likened our lives to a race.
 - We can never be satisfied with our current state.
 - We practice discipline as we strive for mastery, and crown of victory.
 - We continually strive for the stature of Christ, knowing we will not attain it in this life.
 - Yet we must pursue it still.
 - The diligent striving is part of our calling.

Integrity

- God has never tolerated injustice or dishonesty (Le. 19:35-6).
 - He requires integrity in our business dealings.
 - He requires it in our personal relationships as well.
 - We must not bear false witness.
 - In all things, we must be honest.
- We cannot retaliate (Ro. 12:17).
 - We must maintain integrity when mistreated.
 - Bitterness and revenge will block vision.

Integrity

- Success can blind you.
 - Beware of the temptation to use organization and planning skills for unethical personal gain.
 - Don't use strategy to take advantage of others.
 - God has given you these skills to help others.
 - Strive for success, but be wary when it is accomplished.
 - Struggle tests your vision and commitment.
 - Success tests your integrity.

Integrity

- God's anointing and vision in your life are to lead you to do His will, not yours.
 - Sometimes what seems to be great spiritual accomplishment has more to do with self than spirituality.
 - How can you tell that your integrity is waning?
 - When integrity wanes, we are more concerned with the acclaim of success (even "spiritual success") than fulfilling God's will.

Humility

- A key distinction between David and Solomon was their humility.
 - David was a great leader, but not immune from his carnality.
 - Though Solomon possessed great wisdom, he failed to remain humble.
- Humility is essential to God's blessing.
 - The Lord requires it (Mi. 6:8).
 - Humility is tied to justice, mercy and integrity.
 - We cannot retain our integrity without humility.
 - Humility brings favor from the Lord.
 - He exalts those that humble themselves (Lu. 18:14).
 - In His kingdom, greatness is found in humility.

Humility

- Jesus is our greatest example of humility.
 - He demonstrated humility at the Last Supper (Jn. 13:4-17).
 - The greatest example, though, is Calvary (Ph. 2:5-8).
 - Jesus understood His deity, yet willingly forsook it.
 - He became our servant even unto a shameful death.
 - He died willingly for us.
 - He is the one man who never deserved to die.
 - Instead, He died on the cross.
 - He died accursed that we could die without sin.
- Knowing His sacrifice compels us to the same kind of humility (Ph. 2:5).

Humility

- Again, success can blind you.
 - We dare not trust in our own skills.
 - We must give God the glory for every success.
 - Like Solomon, we may accomplish great things in men's eyes, but we only have God's anointing through humility.

God's Anointing

- The importance of anointing may be represented best by the story of Samson.
 - Samson's life is a tragic story of neglected anointing.
 - God's calling was upon him (Ju. 13:3-5).
 - He triumphed over the Philistines, but temptation ruined him.
 - Success brings temptation.
 - Samson became proud in his success, played with sin, and lost his anointing (Ju. 16:19).

God's Anointing

- There is nothing worth losing the moving of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
 - It is the foundation of our calling.
 - We must not forget how the Holy Spirit has changed us.
 - We must not forget that the Holy Spirit has given us purpose.
 - Spiritual people don't become more effective by replacing the moving of the Holy Spirit with their own skills.
 - Spiritual people become more effective by submitting those skills to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

God's Anointing

- Don't neglect your anointing (I Ti. 4:14-16).
 - To abide in Him, we must retain anointing (I Jn. 2:27).
 - It helps us resist the seduction of the world.
 - Anointing teaches us what is right.
 - Obey your calling.
 - Your salvation depends on it.
 - The salvation of others depends on it too.

The Demonstration of the Holy Spirit

- We must always be submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - We must respond to that leading.
 - To be effective, we need plans to achieve His leading.
 - We must also be ready, at any time, to cast our plans aside, and let the Holy Spirit take control.
 - Remember, the Holy Spirit always does things right.

The Demonstration of the Holy Spirit

- Does that mean, then, that we shouldn't make plans?
 - Certainly not!
 - We must understand, though, that no matter how sincere we are, our wills sometimes get in the way.
 - Sometimes we are not ready for everything the Lord has for us.
- We must plan to accomplish His purpose.
 - However, what's most important isn't your plan.
 - Ultimately, what's important is accomplishing His purpose.

The Demonstration of the Holy Spirit

- Apostolic churches will inevitably seek help to be more effective.
 - Secular people can train Apostolic churches to organize, plan and strategize.
 - While helpful, it is not enough.
 - The church can't be run like a business.
 - Other churches can teach Apostolics to organize, plan and strategize.
 - They don't have a conviction for Apostolic doctrine or demonstration.
 - What you believe does affect how you think.
 - Neither Apostolic doctrine nor demonstration can be sacrificed.
 - Only those filled with the Spirit are committed to the leadership and demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

The Demonstration of the Holy Spirit

- Spiritual people can be organized, strategic thinkers.
 - Spiritual demonstration must be encouraged (I Co. 14:39; I Th. 5:19-20).
 - There is a right way for Apostolics to be more organized and more effective.
 - God will establish leaders with a firm conviction to have the demonstration of the Holy Spirit, who also believe the Apostolic church can be more effective without losing that demonstration.