

Being and Doing – Taken from the Steward Leader.

I am a doer. I have the reputation of going one-hundred-sixty plus kilometers per hour, always focused on accomplishing objectives, meeting deadlines and crossing things off my challenging to-do lists.

I like results over process, action over deliberation, the tangible over the theoretical. And I like to lead people to accomplish goals and realize vision.

What gets in my way are processes, people with “issues,” using time inefficiently and undertaking work that seems irrelevant. I say I am committed to transformation, but it must get done on schedule and show some real results.

The problem with this style of leadership is that it denies the truth of the gospel and our creation in the image of God. If we are truly made in the image of God, our perception of God will necessarily and significantly influence our self-understanding. If we view God as a solitary being (something ultimate and indivisible) an isolated being known for power and transcendence, we will be leaders who reflect those characteristics. We will be lone rangers, seeking power and focusing on doing. We will see people as a means to an end and value the product over the process. If we see God as a distant and detached monarch, we will lead as monarchs. If, however, we are true to our trinity doctrine, we learn that relationship is what defines us. We learn that to be God’s people we must focus on who we are as people in relationship. We learn that leadership must be concerned with the whole person and that God’s intent is for us to do the work of the kingdom within and through the community of believers.

This is the journey of transformation from which we develop the heart of the steward leader. A proper understanding of our creation in the Image of God also teaches us that what is most important to God is not what we do but who we are. Secular leadership experts are waking up to the fact that the key to leadership effectiveness is self-awareness. In Christian terms this means that the leader, through self-awareness and self-criticism, is the one who is transformed first.

The servant views any problem in the world as in here, inside himself, and not out there. And if a flaw in the world is to be remedied, to the servant the process of change starts in here, in the servant, and not out there.

Before God can do a great work in an organization, that work must be done first in the heart of the leader. Unless God has taken our hearts captive, all of our good “doing” lacks spiritual integrity and Christlike authority. Our work exposes the absence of God’s anointing.

At the exact moment we think we have it all together, we cease to be usable in the work of the kingdom. If I could put one Bible verse on the desk of every pastor and every Christian leader in the world, it would be this: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). As steward leaders we must be engaged in a constant process of self-evaluation and repentance. It is so easy for us to be tempted in a variety of directions, and when we stray, we affect our entire ministry. Steward leaders undertake their work with deep humility and a keen awareness of their weaknesses and shortcomings. They know themselves well, seek accountability, pray fervently

and watch carefully for red flags and warning signals. Nouwen challenges us to seek this defining characteristic of Christian leadership. The central question [of the heart of Christian leadership] is, are the leaders of the future truly men and women of God, people with an passionate desire to dwell in God's presence, to listen to God's voice, to look at God's beauty, to touch God's incarnate Word, and to taste fully God's infinite goodness?

For this reason, the greatest tool for effective steward leaders is a mirror and a group of friends to be sure they are looking into it with clarity and focus. Becoming a leader of no reputation means not being afraid to honestly and intentionally deal with our weaknesses and uncover the problematic things in our private world. It means letting God transform you. For this reason, the greatest tool for effective steward leaders is a mirror and a group of friends to be sure they are looking into it with clarity and focus. When this ongoing transformation is added to the desire to decrease while Christ increases, all under the anointing power of the Spirit, the steward leader begins to emerge.

Rodin, R. Scott. The Steward Leader: Transforming People, Organizations and Communities (pages 17-19). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

Questions for discussion

- What does it mean to “like results over process, action over deliberation, the tangible over the theoretical.”?
- How is this contrary to becoming a Steward Leader? We will be lone rangers, seeking power and focusing on doing. We will see people as a means to an end and value the product over the process.
- How does our understanding of being created in the image of God teach us that what is most important to God is not what we do but who we are?
- What does this mean? “Before God can do a great work in an organization, that work must be done first in the heart of the leader.”
- Why is this true? “At the exact moment we think we have it all together, we cease to be usable in the work of the kingdom.”
- What does this mean? “For this reason, the greatest tool for effective steward leaders is a mirror and a group of friends to be sure they are looking into it with clarity and focus.”
- A good point of wisdom: “For this reason, the greatest tool for effective steward leaders is a mirror and a group of friends to be sure they are looking into it with clarity and focus.”