

## The Steward Leader in Relationship With Our Neighbor-Part Three

**Using others.** Successful second-kingdom builders. are experts at using people to get what they want. When you add the temptation to see the size of our kingdom as the source of our self-worth, you have the perfect storm. If we are in bondage to second-kingdom building, we place those under our authority in bondage to us. We need people to serve us if we are to achieve our goals. We measure their worth and the value of our relationship with them according to the level at which they serve us. Our attitude toward them is utilitarian (they are useful to us), and our method is expediency (suitable or useful for achieving a particular end in a given situation). Get what you need and move on.

This may seem like an exaggeration, but how many of us have worked for a superior we felt was concerned only about what we could *do*, not *who* we were? Even the best leaders in times of stress can revert back to utilitarian attitudes and owner-leader methods of operation. ***We must be careful to watch for those times when our view toward an employee has shifted and we revert to the expedient rather than the transformative. Sometimes we know it immediately; other times it comes on little by little.***

Tragically, this temptation to use our relationships to get us what we want or need is too easily transferred from our vocational world to our private world. We can just as easily (and sometimes more easily) use our relationships with our friends, our children, and our spouse as ways to get what we want and need in life, rather than ends in themselves that require our selfless presence. In fact, it is nearly impossible to tell the difference between our attitudes towards our different relationships, that we can be one person at work and another at home or church or among friends. If we are building a second kingdom at work, we are likely building it everywhere else as well.

### ***Using God.***

The final distortion is when this use of others shifts to our relationship with God.

How easy it is to take this final step and view God as a means to our own end. It affects our prayer life, our worship and our devotional life, and it erodes the foundation upon which everything else is built.

Again, everything is dependent on our ability to be free toward God, freely knowing his love and freely accepting who we are as his image bearers. If we are back in bondage to the owner-leader mindset in our relationships with others, it will work its way back into our relationship with our self and finally into our relationship with God. We can actually attempt to use God to build a bigger kingdom for ourselves; such is the extent of the bondage that holds on to us.

As the image bearers of a God whose very nature is interdependent fellowship and community, we are in need of daily transformation to steward our relationships and to see them as ends and not self-serving means. We must pray for it daily and seek the Spirit's transformational work within us at this level as we seek to live out our calling to be stewards of these relationships.

### **A Discipline: Seeing Our Neighbors as God Sees Them**

In truth we are all kingdom builders at some level. It is a temptation against which we must pray and work daily. We all use some relationships to get what we want. We all treat people we care about with expediency instead of presence. We all sense our freedom slipping away at times. These are signs of the need for the daily disciplines as steward leaders.

### ***Change of vision.***

At this third level we must seek daily a change in our vision. We must pray that God will give us eyes to see and hearts to embrace the people in our world as God sees them and loves them. We must pray for a heart that seeks to contribute to the greater story that God is writing for each of them. As God answers that prayer, we will reject the temptation to expediency and more willingly make the sacrifice of time required of the gift of presence. We will see people as ends in themselves and call them to a level of accountability that reflects the very best of their God-given skills and giftedness. We will be free toward our neighbors, so that we might love them as we love ourselves.

### ***Accountability.***

In addition to prayer, we need our own accountability. So, the second part of this discipline is habitually inviting the trust and honesty of a group of people who love us and will covenant to walk with us on this journey. Steward leaders seek out and value accountability. **They know themselves well enough to know that they need the love and honesty of friends and colleagues.** When we are free toward God, free toward ourselves and free toward our neighbor, we are also freed to do the hard work of hearing the truth and continuing to submit ourselves to the transformational work of the Holy Spirit. Pray for the mind of Christ and seek out accountability daily.

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- [Tragically, this temptation to use our relationships to get us what we want or need is too easily transferred from our vocational world to our private world.](#) Has this ever been a challenge for you?
- [How easy it is to take this final step and view God as a means to our own end. It affects our prayer life, our worship and our devotional life, and it erodes the foundation upon which everything else is built.](#) Why can it be easy to find ourselves “using” God?

- [we are in need of daily transformation....We must pray for it daily and seek the Spirit's transformational work within us at this level as we seek to live out our calling to be stewards of these relationships.](#) Why is this a “daily” need?
- [Change of vision.](#) Some great application in the is section.
- [They know themselves well enough to know that they need the love and honesty of friends and colleagues.](#) Can this be true if we are not free with ourselves?