

The Steward Leader

Conclusion

Beyond the successful achievement of our mission and our strategic goals, God calls us as individuals and as faith communities to be witnesses in this world. We must never forget this overarching responsibility. We don't serve God's kingdom if we reach our goals using worldly values and standards. If we build our success on poor stewarding of our people's time and talents, we have failed in our call. If we claim victory in a capital campaign when the world sees manipulation and pressure as our tools, we have built in vain. We can become the false spiritual fronts of which Jesus said, "You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean" (Matthew 23:27).

How many fallen leaders fit this description? When they failed to allow the Holy Spirit to do the internal work of transforming them into a godly steward, they became owner-leaders. When they failed, their organizations paid a heavy price, but the greatest damage done was to the reputation of the kingdom of God. All the frontal attacks by atheists and Christ-haters in the media and literature combined have done less damage to the witness of the body of Christ than Christian leaders who have failed to live consistent lives as godly stewards.

In October 2008, (The USA) experienced the beginning of a major economic collapse, due in large part to the greed of financial leaders in our banks, investment firms and regulatory agencies. One of my colleagues knew I was writing this book and had read a summary version of its main points. He called me and said, "Scott, write fast. We desperately need steward leaders!" And so, we do. What is at stake in our Christian ministries and churches is not just missional effectiveness but transformational witness.

What does the world see when it looks at your ministry-not its brochures, videos and annual reports, although those can be useful, but when they talk to your employees, walk your grounds, attend your events, listen to your board members and view your work in your community with other leaders and organizations? What do they say about you when they see you on the street, encounter you in a shop or ride with you on public transport?

Consistency and witness are fundamentally tied together. If the enemy cannot make us unfaithful, he will try to make us ineffective. And we lose our effectiveness as steward leaders when we model inconsistent behavior and allow our organizations to do the same. What we lose is our witness, which means we bring shame on the name of Jesus Christ.

This final admonition points once again to the damage that can be done by the owner-leader. **If you are attempting to lead while in bondage to the need to control, you will fail.** Your organization will falter, and you will do damage to the witness of Jesus Christ in this world. Those are very high stakes! This is why throughout Scripture God consistently called men and women who loved him to leadership. They were anointed before they were appointed. They sought his face before all else.

And they succeeded not because of their abilities, but because, they were God's man, God's woman. Yahweh is looking for those whose eyes are looking back toward heaven, those with whom the Spirit can make eye contact. For this reason, the first level of our created relationship is intimacy with God. And we are back to the start.

This daily intimacy arises as the very core from which the steward leader leads. It is the beginning point on the journey of transformation. It is God's deepest desire for us.

The great church father Irenaeus (2nd century A.D.) proclaimed, "The glory of God is man fully alive."

And so I return to the questions I posed at the outset of this journey:

- Are you prepared to go deeper in your faith than you have ever gone before?
- Are you ready to be used by God in more powerful ways than you ever thought possible?
- Do you desire to bless the people you serve and the organizations you are called to lead?
- Are you ready for the journey?

That is your calling, your hope and your promise. God can make you fully alive as a godly steward who responds with joyful obedience in every area of life. I would add to Irenaeus's quote, "The glory of the kingdom of God is the leader who is completely free." Through such a leader, God can do great things for the kingdom. And chief among them is the consistent work of a community of godly stewards who bear witness to the world of the transformational work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The result is a community fully alive. To God be the glory!

Daily Submitting Every Aspect of Our Lives to the Lordship of Christ

This is my one continual prayer to God, hour by hour, day upon day:

It's yours. I am not fighting this battle for you, God. It's your battle, and you are fighting it for me. It is all yours, and I want whatever you have for me in this situation. It is not my organization, it is yours. So, I depend on your Spirit to show me what to do. These are not my people. I chose them and organized their efforts, but they do not belong to me. So, this day is yours; I am yours; these people are yours; the resources are yours. The

challenges we face are yours, as is anything we hope to accomplish. It's yours, God. It is not mine.

I encourage every leader to pray this prayer every morning. It is a prayer of freedom. Our daily discipline must begin before we leave our beds. It begins with this simple prayer: “It is not mine; it is yours.” Don’t leave your bed without it! Discipline yourself to recognize bondage attitudes and attack them at the outset with the freedom of absolute submission to the triune God of abundant grace.

- [God calls us as individuals and as faith communities to be witnesses in this world we must never forget this overarching responsibility.](#)
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Why could this be true?

- [What is at stake in our Christian ministries and churches is not just missional effectiveness but transformational witness.](#) Is this idea only confined to the church? What about business, or government? Sacred/Secular divide.
- [Consistency and witness are fundamentally tied together.](#) Why does this connection matter?
- [If you are attempting to lead while in bondage to the need to control, you will fail.](#) The author keeps going back to the Owner Leader vs. Steward Leader.