

Rock Solid On The Bike

This month, I am pleased to have [Bryan Loritts](#) write a guest post for Lead With Your Life. As a colleague in Kingdom ministry, Bryan is a man I deeply respect. He is the Lead Pastor of [Abundant Life Christian Fellowship](#) in Mountain View, California. He also serves as the President of the [Kainos Movement](#), an organization committed to seeing the multi-ethnic church become the new normal in our world. In addition to these positions, Bryan serves on the board of trustees for Biola University, and is the husband of Korie Loritts, and father of Quentin, Myles and Jaden. He's been a featured speaker at the Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit, Catalyst and a host of other events.

On The Bike

A few times a week I, along with several dozen other classmates, mount a stationary bike for forty-five minutes of pure hell. "Spin class," the very mention of that phrase causes me to recoil. But thanks to Adam and his sin in the garden, it's the price I now have to pay. So off I go at some God-forsaken early morning hour, going up and down from my seat, as I fiddle with the knob and adjust the tension on my bike creating more resistance and hopefully burning more calories.

Now spin class is hard enough, but what makes it downright deflating is when, like the other day, my instructor plays the role of drill sergeant as she paces back and forth, begging and pleading with us to give it our all. I wanted to go postal when she castigated one of my panting participants for not pushing it harder. *Excuse me? How are you even talking in sentences right now? Oh, that's right, you're not on your bike.*

Nothing is more deflating than a so called leader who's not on the bike with you.

Leadership really is about getting on the bike with your people. The leaders who most inspire me aren't necessarily the most educated, or even the most winsome. But the leaders who move me are the ones who are buying what they're selling, who are personally invested as much as, if not more, than their followers. Leaders like Cortes who needed his men to be so sold out to the mission in front of them that he commanded their boats to be sunk, eliminating any possibility of ever going back. Leaders like Michael Jordan who was so determined not to let the 1993 NBA Finals go to a seventh and deciding game that he took only enough clothes with him to Arizona for one night, instead of potentially two (they won that game—game six). And who could forget Jesus who paid the ultimate sacrifice by mounting a cross, and doing for us what we could never do for ourselves. This is real leadership, the kind that inspires.

Leadership is not do what I say, but do what I do. There's just no getting around this. In our

postmodern culture where we value normalcy, and this kind of flat-line egalitarian (I'm not using that in reference to men and women) sense of wanting to project we're all the same, it's easy to downplay the importance of leadership. But the older I get the more I'm convinced that nothing happens of eternal redemptive value outside of loving, caring and proactive leadership in which the leader is on his bike with the people.

Paul showed this kind of "on the bike" leadership when he wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians. He had gotten wind that some in the church were falling into laziness, and he needed them to work hard. So he wrote, "For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, *but to give yourselves an example to imitate*" (2 Thessalonians 3: 7-9, emphasis mine). This is leadership. Paul wanted his followers to step it up. He didn't point them to a book or blog to read. He didn't ask them to attend a class. He just simply pulled them close and said, "Look at me". He worked hard. He wasn't idle. He intentionally modeled before them the desired outcome. He was "on his bike."

Thankfully there are numerous spin classes at my gym with other instructors. Nikki, my Monday morning spin class instructor, is my favorite. Sure, she gets on us, trying to extract every ounce of effort she can, but she's earned that right because she's on the bike with us. Sometimes she's so invested she can't even talk, just motioning with her hands to keep pushing. And we do. She's earned it because she's in it with us. That's leadership.

Parents, our kids want to know if we're buying what we're selling them, if we're "on the bike." Pastor, your congregation wants to know if you're "on the bike." Christ-follower who takes the great commission seriously as you are pouring into others, your disciples want to know if you're "on the bike."

Some very thought-provoking words from Bryan. Leader, the older I get the more I'm convinced that nothing happens of lasting value apart from the loving and proactive leadership of being "on the bike" with those entrusted to our care.

Chuck