

Rock Solid

The Leader as a Pipeline

January 2010 – The Answer: “The Hokey Pokey.”

The Question: “What song was playing when I turned on the ignition of my wife’s car last week?”

That’s right! It’s the first song on the Fisher Price “Bath Tub Sing Along” CD. I bet you don’t have that on your iPod playlist! (Can you tell we have grandkids?) Join me! “You put your right foot in, you put your right foot out, you put your right foot in and you shake it all about. You do the hokey pokey and you turn yourself around. That’s what it’s all about.”

Well, that’s what the “Hokey Pokey” is all about, but in this letter I want to talk about what SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP is all about.

Recently, I led a workshop on spiritual leadership. As part of the journey, each person developed their own working definition of spiritual leadership. Let me place my own “ever-a-work-in-progress” definition before you for your consideration:

Spiritual leadership is a sacred stewardship of guiding, influencing, serving, and inspiring others to fulfill God’s purposes based on the active work of God in the life of the leader.

While there are a plethora of thoughts packaged snugly into that single sentence, I want to laser in on the final few words: “based on the active work of God in the life of the leader.”

In direct contrast to everyday leadership where the leader is the SOURCE of direction and inspiration, spiritual leadership is about the leader being a CONDUIT of direction and inspiration. Spiritual leaders understand that ultimately they are pipelines. They realize that true spiritual leadership emanates from a life in concert with the Divine Leader. This is the essence and distinction of spiritual leadership. As such, the call is for the leader to be in constant communication with God.

This matter of constant communication is well-illustrated when you watch a game of football. The coach is in constant communication with the quarterback by flashing signals from the sidelines or sending in new players with the next play. The quarterback is never in doubt about what play the coach wants run.

So what are some ways to make sure that we are in constant communication with God so that He is ACTIVE in our lives and leadership? Let me offer a few thoughts to think over:

- Design a daily rhythm of throttling back the RPMs and quieting yourself before the Lord so that you can hear His voice above the noise and distraction of everyday life.

- Check in with the Lord early in the morning about the upcoming day's appointment calendar asking Him to help you be attentive to His leading and wisdom in each situation.
- Cultivate a holy curiosity by looking for God in the moments when you are least likely to think He will 'show up'.
- Humble yourself by admitting that only in God's strength are you sufficient for the challenges of life and leadership.
- Resist the temptation to ride the wave of yesterday's communion with the Lord. Seek out His fresh supply of wisdom, insight and guidance.
- Reflect throughout the day on some Scriptures that speak to the issues, needs or challenges that are presently pressing in on you.

When it is all said and done, remember to rehearse repeatedly the reality that if you posture yourself as the SOURCE, you will ultimately (not to mention, quickly) run dry; but as you serve as the CONDUIT, you become a channel of a never-ending supply of life-giving direction and inspiration for those who look to you for leadership.

THAT'S what it's all about.

Lord, in my life and leadership, I want Your work to be new and fresh and alive and active. Forgive me for thinking I can do this on my own. I want to serve others as a pipeline of Your direction and inspiration.