

# When God Leads You Against the Current

It was my day off.  
And it couldn't have started better.

Several years ago, Pattie and I lived in the South Bay, and I wanted to start the day at the ocean. I arrived at Redondo Beach just as the sky was welcoming a new day.

The salt-filled air greeted me first. Then the sounds.

Seagulls darted overhead, celebrating whatever breakfast they had discovered along the shoreline. Larger-than-normal waves rolled in with authority, crashing on the sand. Sweat-browed runners moved with determined focus, pounding out their miles. And just beyond them, wet-suited surfers bobbed patiently on their boards, waiting for the next wave. As I stood there taking it all in, something caught my eye.

About a hundred yards offshore was a swimmer.  
Not casually floating. Not drifting.  
Swimming.

Stroke. Stroke. Stroke.

Slowly but steadily moving across the horizon.

He wasn't riding waves like the surfers. There was no momentum carrying him forward. In fact, he was moving against the current. Every inch required effort. Every stroke demanded intention.

Nothing easy about it.

Impressive, to say the least.

"Okay," you might be thinking. "Nice beach story. What's the point?"

Here it is.

Tucked quietly into the leader's job description is the responsibility to lead *cross-current*.

To resist the pull of the crowd.  
To turn away from the easy drift of the culture.  
To follow God's direction—even when it moves opposite the flow.

And mark this down:

If you desire to walk in step with Him, you eventually have to come to terms with His unmistakable pattern of doing things in ways that feel... unconventional...unorthodox.

Sometimes even impossible.

Just ask Moses about being told to escape Egypt by walking through a divided sea. (Do what?!)

Ask Joshua about conquering a fortified city by organizing a seven-day walkathon complete with trumpets and shouting.

Or interview Gideon, who prepared for battle by dramatically reducing his army instead of strengthening it. (You won't find that strategy in *The Art of War*.)

The list goes on.

And to be clear, God doesn't hide this reality.

He says it plainly: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways." (Isaiah 55:8)

No fine print required. No instant replay required.

Henry and Richard Blackaby capture this beautifully in *Experiencing God*:

*When your life is in the middle of God's activity, He will start rearranging a lot of your thinking. God's ways and thoughts are so different from yours and mine they will often sound wrong, crazy, or impossible.*

That has certainly been my experience.

Because when God invites you into His work, the assignment will almost always stretch beyond your comfort zone...beyond your resources...sometimes even beyond what feels reasonable.

Which raises an honest question.

Has God ever asked you to lead cross-current?

To take a step that didn't make sense on paper?

To choose obedience when the easier option was simply to go with the flow?

Here's the paradox.

It is often at that exact moment—when the path feels uncertain and the outcome unclear—that God has us precisely where He wants us.

No alternate route.

No Plan B.

Just an open invitation to trust Him.

To believe that He not only knows the way...

He *is* the way.

And like that lone swimmer moving steadily across the horizon, Kingdom leadership often looks like quiet faithfulness—one intentional stroke at a time—trusting that God Himself provides the strength to move forward, even against the current.

