

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY

Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 6 Leadership Issues

By

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Living in Christ Ministries

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Lord, we come once again, open, hungry, delighting to hear from You, and wanting to meekly receive the implanted Word which is able to deliver our souls. Speak to us again, by Your Holy Spirit, Lord, on just the various leadership issues in Your church that You want to bring to our attention now. And then work to conform us to the image of Your Son. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are going to look at various leadership issues in this study on church leadership. Leaders face many opportunities and challenges. The more God uses us, the more opportunities there are, but the more challenges there are also. And there are various common issues and really vital issues that we are going to look at: ministry to our own family; relationships with other leaders; relationships with the church; equipping for ministry and leadership; intensified spiritual warfare; inevitable opposition; and setting up the proper spiritual banner.

First of all we will look at ministry to our own families. [Matthew 10:37](#) says, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” Now let's just hold that thought in our minds for a moment. Alongside of that and in a way almost in tension with that, we will look at [1 Timothy 5:8](#). “But if anyone does not provide for his own, especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

On the one hand, if our families are more important to us than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, we should not really be calling ourselves true disciples of Jesus Christ. “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. He who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” The Lord Jesus Christ must be the centerpiece. He must be the highest priority. We must love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And even something as precious to us as our families, and as important in the plan of God as our families, must not eclipse the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and our loving and serving Him.

So that is a danger on the one hand. Especially if we have a godly love for our kids and want to be responsible toward the family, we can let the natural and even the God-given love for them run unleashed to the point where nothing else matters. It can lead one to say, “Don't bother me, I'm taking care of my family. That's your problem; I'm taking care of my family. No I can't get to that meeting; I'm taking care of my family.” And it can eclipse everything.

But, there is another problem on the other end of the spectrum. And that is being so involved in what we think is service for the Lord that we do not provide for the needs of our household. In that sense, it is as if we are denying the faith by our wrong priorities. The Lord has commanded us to love and cherish and nurture and take care of our family. And again, the question that comes to the human mind is: “Wow, where do you draw the line?” This is the classic question of humanity, once they are saved. Before that, you

draw the line as far out there as you can draw it, you know. But when you get in the kingdom and these things come into tension, you must determine where you draw the line.

Again, we do not draw the line. That is what produces self-rule or legalism when you try to rule others. God draws the line. That is why we need a shepherd to shepherd us down the line, down the path. But God wants us to know that there is guidance needed in this because He knows if He does not draw the line, we will draw it in the wrong place. That is for sure. So we want Him to be leading and guiding us and showing us how to love Him without reservation and not let our devotion to family start to supersede that, but rather be an expression of our love for Him. And He wants to show us how to love Him fully but not neglect our families. And the Lord is not challenged by this at all. We are often challenged but we must not be consumed or obsessed with our family. We must not neglect our family. The tension is in us, not in God.

The more church leaders are used of God to help others press on, the more this issue gets in tension. It just pulls. We see these priorities and think: “Oh, I’ve got to do this in Your name, Lord. And there are these people, and that message, and that meeting, and that group!” And your family may be just dying for love, nurture, guarding, feeding, and caring. Or we can go the other way and say, “Lord, You’ve given me this family, I’m going to be responsible for it and I kind of like it anyway.” We dig into it and everything is family. And the Lord is asking: “What about the rest of My sheep? What about just Me? It’s been a long time since you have poured out your heart toward Me in any other way than, ‘Thank You for my family and help me with my family.’ Do you have any time just to love Me and to adore Me?”

It is a real healthy tension, in a sense, because both are the will of God. But only God can put them together, which means we need to heed His Word, and walk by the Spirit. “Here is what You say, Lord, now guide me through it.” But it is an area that we need to be attentive to, aware of, and praying about—ministry to our own family. We must neither be obsessed with them, nor neglecting them. We must be putting them in that right special priority in His name and in His love, but not letting it eclipse Him or displace His will.

Another issue is our relationship with other leadership. [Mark 3:14](#) addresses leaders, relating to leaders particularly within the local fellowship, but also meeting like this—where leaders in various fellowships minister together. Having a relationship with other leadership is a very important issue. In Mark 3:14, Jesus is calling the disciples to Himself. “Then He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach.” So Jesus appointed the twelve apostles. There were other groups, the seventy, the hundred and twenty, and in the twelve there were the three, and even John the one, whose head was resting on Jesus’ shoulder and all.

There are all kinds of relationships in the Lord of discipleship groups who lead in the church. The same thing happens in the local church. Why does He spend so much time with those two? Why did He take them on the mountain and show them His glory? I

mean, come on. They are not better than us. Well no, none is good but God alone. He just chooses us and guides us and leads us in different experiences, different aspects of service, different kinds of friendships and relationships. The same thing happens in the local church and we are all involved in those kinds of leadership and fellowship issues. And we need to let God develop them as He wills.

And here He chose twelve that they might be with Him. In a big way the Lord worked to mold, shape, lead, guide, and equip the lives of those who would lead the early church. They hung out with Jesus together and that was the basic discipleship format. They hung out together with Jesus. That is still basic to the church and discipleship today, though we often miss the simplicity of that. And these were the leaders, for our context of study, these were the leaders of the church that was about to be birthed. What are they doing most of the time as they are being equipped? They are hanging out together with Jesus.

It is critical for leadership in a local church to hang out together with the Lord. Just spend time together in the Lord. It might be misread by some as: “They are just in some little clique and they think they’ve got a red-line phone to heaven or something.” Well, leaders can act like that sometimes and that is wrong. When they only show love and interest and attention to each other that is wrong. But leaders need to spend time hanging out together with Jesus. It is one of the mighty ways God works in their lives, molding them, shaping them and leading them so that they might lead others. And this would apply to every one of us in the body of Christ. If we are going to be used of God to lead others, we need to hang out with those we are laboring with in the Lord. And let Him work in our lives so that we might touch other lives. This applies to Sunday school workers, outreach team members, you name it—if they are in an area of leading and serving—they need to have times of hanging out together in the Lord.

Look how this began to work in the early church after the birth of the church. In [Acts 13:1-2](#) it says,

“Now in the church that was in Antioch [This is the first big Gentile church, up kind of to the northwest, when you are looking from Jerusalem right on the Mediterranean coast and in that church] there were certain prophets and teachers: [Here are the leaders of the church] Barnabus, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucious of Cyrene, Maneon who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [These are the leaders in the church at that time in Antioch.] As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to me Barnabus and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

Are we aware of the strategic importance of this particular meeting that day or that season? This was going to affect the extension of the church throughout the Mediterranean world. Here were these leaders in the church. What were they doing at this time? Basically, it is another example of how they were hanging out together with the Lord. They were ministering to the Lord. Remember, that is always our primary ministry. It is too easy to think of ministry as being primarily to the lost or hurting or to other

believers for edification. Those are critical ministries but our primary ministry is always to the Lord; worshipping Him, serving Him, adoring Him, and thanking Him. Then as He works in our lives, we take that love and insight and share it with the family of God. Not for selfish ingrown reasons, but that we might be built up to live in this world more like Christ. We need His light, life, love, and truth to reach out to touch other lives.

That is what the disciples are doing here. They are hanging out, ministering to the Lord in praise, worship, adoration, and waiting upon Him. And that is when the Holy Spirit said, “These two men in our circle as you hang out with Me and you minister to Me, set those two men apart. I have called Barnabas and Saul to a special work.” And they were sent out to take the gospel seeds and plant the church as it was birthed around the world. What a significant moment that was, that those leaders of the church were hanging out together before the Lord.

This is how it all started out. Jesus called twelve to be with Him. And then, from that He sent them out to preach. That is what is happening here, still. And that is still what is to be going on in the church today. Leaders should hang out together with the Lord Jesus Christ. They will hear from the Lord in those times as in no other time. It is the way the Lord did it when He walked on the earth. It is the way He did it after His Spirit was poured out on the church. He is well able to do that now. In fact now, we are so graced and blessed to be able to gather together as leaders in the Word before the Lord and just listen to what He has said and what He wants us to hear.

In Dallas after it began to dawn on us what the purpose and function of the church was, we began more and more to diminish the separation of the so-called practical business, legal operations, and the spiritual body life functioning. And before long it was all blended into one whole. By then the Lord had raised up more spiritual leaders to facilitate that kind of direction. And we met regularly but we did not have prayer meetings, business meetings, or annual meetings. We just had hang-out times for the leaders in the Lord. We always started it with something from the Word for each other, praying for one another, praying for the church and in that if decisions arose, what the world would call business matters, we just treated them like everything else, with prayer and a seeking of the wisdom of God in the Word. So the whole thing was just spiritual family life. And oh how we saw the leadership and the congregation just take a new burst of spiritual growth in those days as the leaders just hung out together in the Lord. It is a place where He works and leads in leadership for His people.

To apply some other Scriptures and principles elsewhere to this kind of a setting is a fun thing to do. Take a given reality in the Word of God, since it all fits together as a whole. And then with that given reality, think of the implications of other truths and principles. Like [Romans 12:10](#) which is not specifically speaking about leadership per se, but in light of the fact that leaders should hang out together in the Lord, listen to what this might say to leaders as they are doing this.

[Romans 12:10](#). “Be kindly affectionate to one another, with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.” Boy can you see a group of leaders gathered in the

name of the Lord treating each other like that with the laughter? Are you talking miracle, or what? Really.

The Lord took us from such a humanistic business-world approach to making decisions in the church where the Robert's Rules of Order was actually written into our church constitution. Boy, we eventually repented of that. Why are we letting the world tell us how to run our meetings? We wanted Jesus' rules of order and we prayed, "By Your Spirit, according to Your Word, we will just gather in Your name. You teach us how to treat one another as we seek You in how to walk together in making decisions." And the Lord started laying things like this on our hearts. Let's just be kind and affectionate to one another. You know, we are brothers. We are not businessmen called here to make decisions. We are brothers gathered here to please the Father. So let's treat each other that way and in honor give preference to one another.

There was to be none of this, "Man, you just got on the board two months ago, will you be quiet. I have been here seven years; don't you think I know what I'm doing?" Just ask the Lord to purge all of that kind of stuff. And prefer one another in honor. "Hey brother, God called you to this team last week, what's been on your heart? We are just dying to hear. Tell us." This is an example of preferring one another in honor, you know. Letting each person know how much we appreciate him. And how we know there is a valuable input of ministry there because God put you here. That is the kind of an attitude that is part of the godly hanging-out in Christ Jesus for leadership. This is good for Sunday school workers, outreach workers, mercy ministries, deacons, and elders.

There is another example in [Ephesians 4:3](#). Since leaders are exemplified by hanging out together in the Lord that is basically how the Lord has touched and built leaders and led them. Ephesians 4:3. How about this truth for leaders to consider in that context? It applies to all believers, but how about leaders? They are to be "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Wow!

You know, early on as a pastor, the time of the month I hated the most was when the church leaders got together. I could tell when it was approaching by what was going on in my stomach. I felt physical anguish because I knew it would be appropriate. Oh in the early years, I tell you, there was so much foolishness and so much worldliness. Oh, we had zeal, but it was not according to knowledge. And it got to where I just dreaded those meetings. Afterwards I would thank God that we had four weeks to recover before the next leadership meeting. Do you know what happened? God so transformed our vision for the church and leadership that it got to where we could not wait until the next meeting. It got to where we had a meeting every week. And if we could have done it responsibly, we would have done it more often than that. We came to love one another's company. We just anticipated it. There was such joy, laughter, tears, earnest prayer and a real endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There was a real attentiveness.

When the Holy Spirit has given us oneness, let's guard it. How? It is done in the bond of peace. Let's be careful with one another not to stir up unnecessary strife. Sure the spirit

and the flesh war against each other and there will be things within and sometimes among, but let's aim in prayer and faith to be an instrument to avoid it, and not cause it. What a joyful way to gather, looking for unity and peace. Knowing that God is a god of both and He can keep building it.

Then in [1-Peter 3:8](#), we find that leaders hang-out in the Lord's name with each other. "Finally all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another. Love as brothers. Be tender-hearted. Be courteous." Boy, how is that for some counsel for leadership. Some of these things we are looking at in what you call an average American church setting, not normal but average. Normal being what is in the Word, that's the norm. Average is found in settings where every one of these things has been violated. I know whereof I speak because I have led them! This makes total sense to me, these warnings. But look how God calls us.

We used to have eleven board members and a six-to-five vote carried everything. Man, the strife that produces, and the lobbying, and the religious politics. Then one day the Lord gave us a vision as leaders, to reach out for one-mindedness. "All of you be of one mind." Let's not ask the Lord to get a majority to stomp over a minority. But let's ask God to put us all in submission to what He wants to do. And if we have strong differences, it is obviously time for a season of prayer and waiting on the Lord. If we cannot act in oneness of mind, then let's not act at all. There might be unusual exceptions to that where a leader drifts from the Lord and gets into carnality and becomes an obstruction to what God is doing. God can give wisdom. This is not a law, you know, it's just a direction. But what a direction to reach for!

And the Lord gave us, particularly during about seven straight years, what to me was like Camelot Community Church. Flesh was not allowed to rain on that parade, you know. It was unreal because it was so heavenly and so sweet. We found out later, we had some other lessons to learn and often they were learned in the midst of great strife, you know. And we learned some deep, heavy ones. But we walked in amazing measures for seven years together. And after experiencing some big lessons a lot of us got back into this form of leadership and we had more years of godly fellowship and direction.

But what a way to go in church leadership with one-mindedness, compassion, love, tenderness, courtesy. Wow! The flesh cries out, what does that have to do with running a church? Everything. This is the character of Christ. He is the godhead. There is no arguing in the Trinity. They are not pulling the universe into sectarian camps. And this is the God who lives among us. We can learn more and more to walk in these ways. Often it involves dying to self, yielding to Christ, and forbearing one another. Sometimes it means being firm on an absolute unyielding issue, but doing it gently and lovingly.

There are lots of aspects of growth in leadership but what a glorious way to hang-out together in Jesus Christ. It is a big part of leadership really. I think it is often underestimated. I know of certain church fellowships where the leaders never hang-out together in the Lord. It is monumentally displeasing to the Lord. It diminishes fruitfulness

and it is headed, if there is not change, for eventual disaster. Fellowship among spiritual leaders is just built-in to the way God does things.

Now having relationships within the church means having leaders that relate to the whole family of God in the local fellowship. [1 Peter 5:1-4](#) says, “The elders who are among you, I exhort.” That would be an elder, bishop, overseer, pastor. Peter is writing and he was also an apostle. He also functioned as an elder, pastor. He said, “I who am a fellow elder.” Part of Peter’s ministry was a pastoral and not just apostolic ministry—that is, a shepherding, feeding ministry. He continues, “And a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.” He is speaking to other shepherds or pastors.

[1 Peter 5:2](#) says, “Shepherd the flock of God.” In other words, pastor them or pasture them. Be an under-shepherd of the Chief Shepherd to them, verse 4. Care for them. Love them. Guide them. Guard them. Protect them. Help them to grow up. Feed them a healthy diet. “Shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, serving as overseers.” Here again, we see synonymous terms - elder, overseer, shepherd—just like in Acts 20. “Not by compulsion, but willingly.” You should not serve because you are forced to, coerced or think you have to; but willingly, because you want to. If we do not want to shepherd the flock of God, then God would have us doing something else. “Not for dishonest gain, but eagerly.” Your service is not done to get, but because you just cannot wait to get in there and give.

“Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you” ([1 Peter 5:3](#)). Do you know why some men want to be leaders or pastors? They love to exercise authority over people. They love to say, “do this” and people do it. Or they say, “don’t do that” and they do not do it. They are just high on power. We are to function as leaders not as being lords over those entrusted to us. Do you get the implication there? God has trusted these lives into our care. God has entrusted this Sunday school class to my leading. God has entrusted this nursery ministry to my leadership. God has entrusted these people to my pastoring. In other words, we are accountable to Him and we are not to “lord over” the Lord’s sheep. Let Him be the Lord. Let us just be servants in His name.

But being examples to the flock, not saying: “Do this, do that, and don’t do this,” but become that example. “Lord, make me what You are telling me to teach to Your sheep to be.” And then when the chief shepherd appears, and He is coming back for us, praise the Lord! It could be any time now. “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” These are not the glory days. Glory days are coming. We will all be glorifying Him in glorious splendor and blessing and privilege. Some day, if we will serve Him now, He will say to us, “Well done good and faithful servant” ([Matthew 25:21](#)). And that will probably be the most astounding thing we could ever have fall on our ears because we will know anything done was by His faithfully working in and through us.

C. S. Lewis wrote about this verse in Matthew 25. It is like the artist stepping back from the painting and saying, “Oh painting, you bless me. Good job.” “Lord, Lord, I am Your

handiwork.” And we will just give Him all the glory. You talk about a love relationship for eternity! He says to us, “Well done servant.” Praise the Lord!

Another leadership issue is equipping for ministry and leadership. Leaders are to equip others to serve. Leaders are to produce leaders. [Ephesians 4:11-12](#) says, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists and some pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ.” God’s leaders are to be busy about outfitting all of God’s people for ministry. It is not that a few people are “in the Ministry” and all the rest of Christendom just partakes of their ministry. We are all called to the ministry. It is just different kinds of ministry and different positions. And the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor/teachers, they are primarily to give themselves to outfitting the saints, the children of God, for the work of ministry. Why? So that the whole body might be built up as the whole body serves one another in the name of the Lord.

And then [2-Timothy 2:2](#) on this very issue of equipping for ministry and leadership says, “And the things which you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” This is the apostle Paul writing to Pastor Timothy. There is a good example here for all of us about being used to touch other lives and how we are to do that. Paul said, “I shared with you many things of God, commit these things to other faithful men who will take it and be able to teach it to others also” (cf. 2 Timothy 2:2). So we are to just keep receiving from God through others, and passing it on to those who will pass it on to others. That is how leadership is developed. Leaders should be equipping and raising-up other leaders.

Praise God for the example of Pastor Chuck Smith in this area. He faithfully passed on what God gave him to others that he realized would be faithful to pass it on to yet others. And now it has been going on for thirty years and it has been passed on and on to multiple generations spiritually in many parts of the world. That is exactly what God is ready to do with any life that is willing to have Him work to the extent that God wants to do it. The equipping for ministry and leadership is a very important leadership issue.

Here is another one from [2-Timothy 2:3](#) that relates to intensified spiritual warfare. Every Christian lives on a spiritual battlefield. The more we serve and lead, the more obvious it becomes that we are in a battle. Here is Timothy, now a pastor and he says, “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” We are all soldiers of the cross. We are all in a spiritual battle. The extent of our involvement in leadership does not matter, whenever we are used to touch other lives and lead people in God’s direction, the spiritual battle is intense. The stakes just get higher. Illustrative from a physical, literal, military band is the fact that the more responsibility in the battle, the greater the pressure and the impact of all of it. Every private on the battlefield knows he is at war. But you get men making decisions involving the lives of other men and then you get a general looking over of the whole thing and I mean the magnitude of the warfare is tremendous.

In the battles in the Old Testament sometimes they said, “Forget everybody else, just find the king and shoot at him.” Is there a parallel there, brother pastors? The whole church has enough hassles, let’s just aim at the pastor. Let’s all shoot at him from the hosts of hell. Listen, we wipe him out with one shot or one volley, we can get a whole gang maybe. It is inevitable that there is an intensifying of spiritual warfare when we take leadership positions. Leaders are on the frontlines of battle must endure hardship.

One brother who was appointed a head usher at our fellowship in Irvine, when I was still pastoring there, seemed quite helpful. He seemed to have a servant’s heart in many ways. And another brother was in charge of the ushering arena and he was a deacon. He said, “Let me appoint this one brother over the ushers.” And we prayed about him and I had a little hesitation. I thought it might be a little early, but yielded. And for a few weeks things were going fine. The man was just really enjoying it, you know. “God bless you. Good morning. Good to see you,” you know. “Can I help you here?”

Well, he called me on the phone about two or three weeks into his new ministry, just stirred of heart. “Pastor, this thing is not going right.”

“Well tell me, what’s going on?”

“I thought this was going to be fun. This is a hassle.”

“So, what happened?”

He told me that one of the ushers he was leading had kind of looked at him cross-eyed when he had asked the young man to be stationed in a certain place and do this particular thing. The young man was very young and he kind of took his own initiative on a few things and things got a little chaotic that Sunday morning. And when he mentioned it to the young man, he was doubly offended.

When we serve the Lord we are not signing up for the cake walk at the church picnic. We are signing up for more battle responsibility. Sure there is joy in serving the Lord. But this man thought it was just going to be fun and he had not faced the realities of the Word of God. Sure there is joy in serving the Lord. But also, you therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The more we are willing to take up the cross during the battle, there will be that much more difficulty to deal with. That is not designed to be discouraging or depressing. It is to prepare us and to equip us.

You know we do not want to give literal soldiers helmets and guns and pretend that when they get out in the battlefield, there will be nothing but marshmallows and maybe a few deer to shoot at. You tell them, be ready to duck. They are going to be shooting back at you. And often in church ministry we are kind of coaxing people into helping take the load off of you. You will like this. This will be so much fun. You will be so glad I let you do this. Come on, you will love it. This is kind of a worldly sales pitch. We kind of talked them into it. And they kind of want to somehow be used of God. And they get out there and do it and the enemy comes at them with a spiritual machete. And they then come back to you saying, “You didn’t tell me... What is this?” Well, we should have told them that it will be a privilege to serve the Lord, but you are going to be startled at the battle flack you get.

And that kind of relates to the next one and that is, inevitable opposition. I entered into pastoral ministry with the illusion that no one would ever oppose anything I ever suggested or any direction I ever pointed. Boy, what a rude awakening! And I thought I knew the Bible. I mean, seminary taught it to me from cover to cover and made me get back into parts of it many other times. But I never noticed, and no one ever really pointed out specifically when God is calling to lead His people that there will be many other people out there who do not like that. Even some who you would never believe will end up opposing you.

[Exodus 16:1-3.](#)

“And they journeyed [the children of Israel] from Edom and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin which is between Elam and Sinai on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt, then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, oh that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the pots of Mede and when we ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness this whole assembly with hunger.”

Boy, what a day for Moses and Aaron. Leadership had become a bummer. How wonderful to march out of Egypt. God is victorious. Hallelujah. Come, children. And two million marched together in the mighty army of God. Oh, it is great to serve God's people. Oh what a mighty God we serve. They were not out there very far and the whole congregation who had their groanings to heaven gloriously answered with mighty power and signs and wonders with a good man of God set before them, now the whole congregation is complaining. “You know, Egypt was not that bad—the onions, the leeks, the flesh pot. And all we've got is manna-burgers.”

Sometimes in ministry, it is like the whole congregation opposes you. Thank God that does not happen every day because it would just wipe you out. At times, even if it is not the whole church, it seems like it. You get five or six well-placed voices and the spiritual acoustics of it is like the whole congregation wants to go back from whence I led them. Listen brothers and sisters, if it happened to Moses, who do we think we are? “Oh, that will not happen to me.” Yeah, I thought that too.

In Numbers 16 Moses just kept leading, seeking God, and pressing on. The direction is the Promised Land. Finally they got there. But there were many changes on the way. These must be the rebellious chapters and verses. First Exodus 16 and now [Numbers 16:1-3](#)

“Now Korah, the son of Etsar, the son of Koath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abyrom, the sons of Eliab and Om the son of Pelah, the sons of Rueben, took man.” [Now some people are rallying some opposition.]
“And they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two

hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation [which was in the millions. So this is not like the whole congregation, but this is a pretty formidable opposition] representatives of the congregation, men of renown.”

So first we have the whole congregation in opposition, now we have just the other leaders in opposition.

“They gathered together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, you take too much upon yourselves for all the congregation is holy, every one of them and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourself above the assembly of the Lord?”

Why are you teaching and preaching? Why are you sitting on the board? This is nothing new brothers and sisters. This has been around since the flesh was on the earth. It is inevitable. God can work in our lives to where we less and less cause opposition and we take part in it less and less. But as long as there are the immature, the babes, the learning or the carnal or rebellious, it will be there. And there will be some of those until the kingdom comes.

How about this? [Matthew 16:2](#) shows us it is not just the congregation that was against Moses. Not just jealous, rebellious leaders against the leader. But Matthew 16:22 says, “Then Peter took Him [Jesus] aside and began to rebuke Him saying, far be it from You, Lord. This shall not happen to You.” Now think of the implications of this. We are talking about the Chief Shepherd Himself being opposed by one of the major early leaders of the early church. Who in fact, had just received and passed on one of the greatest insights from heaven yet given to man. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. That is who You are, Jesus.” “Oh flesh and blood did not reveal that to you.” Well, flesh and blood did reveal this to him: “Oh no, You will never go to the cross!” Jesus says, “Get behind me, Satan. You are an offense to Me for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men” (cf. [Matthew 16:23](#)).

Sometimes even godly men working with us (and sadly even we) might be like Peter, opposing the work of God at a given time. It is part of leadership issues and that is why we always need to be led by the Spirit. The Father reveals the plan and the Lord Jesus is the incarnation of it for us to abide in and walk in and follow. Or we can have even godly men oppose us, who are seemingly in the will of God at times maybe, while God is still working in their lives. Or we might find out we got tripped up and we took something we learned of the flesh and the world and resisted something God is doing. It is a leadership issue that we need to be alerted to and be sensitive to.

Listen, if the congregation of jealous, rebellious leaders opposed Moses—and if Jesus Himself was opposed by some of His closest circle, we cannot be absolutely blown off the face of the earth if we find ourselves in the same place. Not that we want to cause it. Not that we are looking forward to it saying, “Yeah, I knew it was coming. Watch me deal with these clowns.” I mean we are not to have that attitude, but just be spiritually prepared and alert. Pray: “Lord, but for Your grace I could be a Peter talking You and

others out of Your will. I find someone I never dreamed would oppose me over something that is so clearly of You and yet it is happening.” It is one of the various leadership issues God wants us to be alert to, aware of, and asking Him to protect us from, but also guide us through.

Then the last principle: we are to be setting up the proper spiritual banner. Again, we are not talking about decorating the sanctuary. We are talking about spiritual ministry and the flag we fly as we serve God. [Psalm 20:5](#) says, “We will rejoice in Your salvation and in the name of our God we will set up our banners.” In the name of our God, we will set up our banners. We can praise God for His work in and His grace upon the Calvary Chapel fellowships that so many of us have been a part of over the years. And we give Him the glory and thank Him. We can even see that He has certain ways where He has worked as He wanted and men and leaders allowed Him to work. And God has used this ministry and extended it. But on the other hand, we cannot make Calvary Chapel our banner. We must set up our banner in the name of our God.

Oh, we went through this in the church I pastored in Dallas. We had seven years of “Camelot Community Church,” which rose from the ashes of two years at “Clone Community Church.” We had a couple of years of chaos, heart-breaking chaos, as schism and division struck this blessed land. It had to do with hyper-dispensationalism and hyper-charismania. And lo and behold, all of the extremists lived in our church. We had been so into love and unity and receiving and accepting, like [Romans 14:1](#) and not getting into doubtful disputations, that we had totally ignored some things that are right and wrong. We ignored some things that you cannot compromise on. You do not have to be mean, nasty, or self-righteous, but you must be true to the Word of God. We had not learned that lesson yet. But boy, when the lessons started coming, they were deep. Praise God what we learned has lasted and become critical in the subsequent eighteen years of ministry.

There were folks in our church who wanted to fly this banner. They said, “Bob, you are the pastor, you see the diversity in this church. It is too much for the unity. The base of unity is collapsing under all this diversity. You have to declare your cards. You have to fly your flag.” And the heavy dispensationalists insisted that there are no spiritual gifts now of any consequence and there are no great moves of the spirit. You know, they just kind of box God in. They reminded me: “This church started Dallas Seminary Bible Church and it has to remain one. It is the only future God has and you have to fly that flag.”

And then we had others who had come out of the Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, and the Benny Hinn charismania arena. This is not to say that there was no love of God and that there were no souls saved. I am not saying that there was an absence totally of the kingdom at work, but there were just a lot of things that man brought in. And they needed to be purged and cleansed and brought back to the light and the truth of the Word of God. On the other hand they would come saying, “No, you cannot let that become... You saw how dead that was as a seminary Bible church. Here is the life. Here is the vitality. Here

is the kingdom now.” And you know, they were yanking and fussing and proselytizing each other. And that represented two significant groups.

Well, there was a big group, at least a third of the church, who did not want to fly either of those banners, including myself. My passion was to raise the banner of Jesus Christ and all be devoted to Him and His Word and let Him change all of us in conformity to His will and His way for that church. The opposition said, “Oh no, no. That’s crazy. That’s so idealistic. That’s impossible and anyway it’s wrong. You fly my banner, or you are wrong.” And oh, we had agony there.

I tell you the Lord taught us some deep lessons: that even though friendships change and that breaks your heart, and people come and go until you weep all night long and you get so helpless and pained that you think you are going to die. But nothing is worth flying any other banner than the name of our God. In the name of our God we will set up our banner. People want to pressure leaders to fly banners they like. We ought to all love to fly the banner of Jesus Christ. It is the name above all names.

Praise God that the Lord sorted it all out! That is a long story in itself and it required some awful dying that some day we might practically live again. And now many of us who went through that have been together for fifteen years. Even though we are in many different places in the church world and the geographic world, it is always right to stay true to the banner of Jesus Christ. It is always wrong to compromise even for good but lesser banners. And it is never right to even consider for a moment to shift to carnal religious banners.

In [Colossians 1:18](#), concerning setting up the proper spiritual banner it says, “And He [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead that in all things He might have the preeminence.” We must give Jesus Christ first place in everything. Let His name be on the banner we fly spiritually over our lives and ministries.

And [Colossians 1:28](#) says, “Him we preach.” What is our message? That is our banner. What do we preach about? When we gather together are we on the Rock? These are the things we need to ask. If you say, “Oh when we are together, no body on earth ever cried or laughed like we did.” Well then maybe you should not be doing it, you know. Check it by the Word of God. Is it holy laughter or is it carnal, shallow frivolity? What banner are we flying anyway? We fly the banner of Jesus Christ. He must be our message. Him we preach. We are not preaching the greatest experience we ever had or hope some day we will have, or that sister so-and-so is having as she rolls through the church. We preach Him! Not come here, and you will really loosen up. No, come here, you will be set free by the truth of Jesus Christ. We preach Him. That is the banner we fly and it must be clear in our message.

Then last of all, [Colossians 3:17](#) says: “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Personally, I thank God for the Calvary Chapel ministries and that of Pastor Chuck Smith, as well as

various other kinds of inter-denominational, non-rigid, non-legalistic ministries throughout the country and the world. But especially, I thank God for the Chapels and Pastor Chuck. But we don't live in the name of Pastor Chuck. And no one on earth would be more grieved over it than Pastor Chuck himself. Thank God for it. No single man, other than perhaps my own father, has had a greater spiritual impact on my own life, than him. I love him dearly. I appreciate him. I respect him. In many ways, I am in awe of him. But he is not our banner. He is not the name we live in. That would pervert the whole gospel. That would destroy what he has given his life for and what the Lord gave His life for.

We must set up the proper spiritual banner. That is one of the wonderful things God has done through the movement of these hundreds of fellowships that are across the country and now outside the country. It is based on a desire to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ in all things, walk in the reality and vitality and liberty of the Holy Spirit, and all of it on the solid rock of the path of the Word of God. May we just keep setting up the proper spiritual banner. It is a real challenge to leadership and the temptation to fly bad banners, and there are a lot of them being flown in the church world today. They range from rigid, dead legalism to just a charismaniac craziness, and there is temptation to fly those banners. But there is also the more subtle temptation, to fly the better banners, but the ones that could never be up on top of the flagpole where Jesus belongs. It is a critical issue in leadership.

Well, let's pray together.

Lord, on all these various issues You want us to be learning, so please be speaking to us and teaching us, Lord. Above all, we want to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus and no other. Just in Your name and not in the name either of other fruitful, blessed, exemplary disciples. Protect us, Lord, in these manners. Lord, show us how to let You develop all these matters more and more we pray. Work them in and through our lives. Teach us how to hang out together in Jesus Christ. Teach us how to be servants. Teach us how to equip others. And teach us above all else, how to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ and everything that pertains to Him. Raise us up as leaders. Use us to raise-up others and may the leaders of the church of Jesus Christ in this day and age become increasingly mighty in the Spirit as declared by the light and truth of the Word of God. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.