

## 5. A Servant Who Leads by Developing a Plan of Action

Christ demonstrated throughout His ministry what it means to be a servant who leads by love. The night before Christ was crucified, John 13:1 says, “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” In this verse, we see why Christ was a perfect example of a servant who led, because we read that:

- Christ loved His own who were in the world
- Christ loved His own to the end

In this verse, we see why the disciples were motivated to follow Christ. They knew that Christ loved them and would continue to love them. A servant has no power to tell others to follow him. Instead people follow a servant because they choose to do so. The disciples chose to follow Christ, because they knew that He loved them and would continue to love them. If we are going to be effective spiritual leaders, we must learn to lead by love. We are developing a plan of action when we commit ourselves to learn to lead by love.

In order to understand the kind of love we are talking about, we need to understand 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. Those verses tell us, “Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

In these verses, we see that love has two major characteristics:

- ♦ Love is patient
- ♦ Love is kind

These verses tell us eight things that love does not do:

- ♦ Love does not envy (is not jealous)
- ♦ Love does not brag
- ♦ Love does not become proud
- ♦ Love does not behave rudely
- ♦ Love does not seek its own way
- ♦ Love is not provoked
- ♦ Love does not think evil
- ♦ Love does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth

These verses also tell us four things love does:

- ♦ Love bears all things
- ♦ Love believes all things
- ♦ Love hopes all things
- ♦ Love endures all things

Then, this is summed up by saying, “Love never fails”. If we regularly ask the Lord to give us His

strength, so that we can be patient and kind, the Lord will give us His strength to avoid the eight things love does not do. He will also give us His strength to regularly practice the things that love does. The key is that we must continually be asking the Lord for His strength so that we are able to act with His actions.

We see that disciples are developed either through fear or love. 1 John 4:18-19 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” We see that Satan wants us to develop disciples through fear, while Christ wants us to develop disciples through love. John 10:10 says, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” If we are going to be a servant who leads, our plan of action must include developing disciples the way that Christ developed disciples.

We need to develop our plan of action based on the example of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” In these verses, we see that:

- Christ loves us
- Christ showed that love by dying for us
- Christ gives us the opportunity to respond to that love

One of the ways we respond to the love of Christ is by making disciples with the same love and concern Christ showed as He made disciples. That was the attitude Paul, Silas, and Timothy showed as they made disciples. In 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12, we see that they:

- showed the love of a nursing mother - verses 7-9
- provided the example of a caring father - verses 10-12

As we follow their example, and the example of Christ, our plan of action for ministry will be motivated by love.

When we serve people out of love, our concern will be to help others develop the full potential that God has given them rather than seek our own success. Christ has given each Christian a different spiritual SHAPE:

S - spiritual gifts

H - heart or passion for ministry

A - abilities

P - personalities

E - experiences in life

If our plan of action is motivated by fear, we will drive people to accomplish our goals.

If our plan of action is motivated by a mixture of fear and love, we will lead people to accomplish our goals.

If our plan of action is motivated by love, we will serve people and help them develop the full potential of their unique SHAPE to carry out the will of God.

The reason it is so important for our plan of action to be motivated by the love of Christ is found in John 13:34-35, where we read, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” In these verses, we see that:

- ◆ Christ says that He has given us a new commandment to love one another
- ◆ Christ says that the world observes our love for one another
- ◆ Christ says this is how the world sees Christ in us

As we make it our purpose and plan to do all that we do through the love of Christ, we will see that Christ uses that plan to develop spiritual maturity in our lives. 1 John 4:11-12 says, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.” These verses tell us that:

- we respond to the love of God by loving one another
- we experience the abiding presence of God in our lives
- we experience God's love being brought to maturity in our lives

As we think about the thoughts and verses we have just discussed, we see that effective leadership is based on a plan of action motivated by the love of Christ. When we are motivated by the love of Christ, we will do what we do through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, and the love of Christ flowing through us. When the power of the Holy Spirit is working in us, and the love of Christ is flowing through us, we will do what we do to bring glory to Christ. That is why developing a plan of action that is motivated by the love of Christ is a plan of action that will accomplish the plan and purpose of God rather than our own will. May the Lord richly bless you, as you develop a plan of action for your life that is motivated by the love of Christ.