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Leadership To The Next Level, Part 2

“Live Dogs vs Dead Lions”

By Mark Gorman

Our last teaching ended with the following 2 paragraphs, which give a proper introduction for today's teaching:

So, with that understanding of Free Will – that we all were born with the Power To Choose, that gives me hope – not only for me – but for everyone else I meet. And it is that knowledge which motivates me to keep pressing on – to achieve more, so I can reach more people, to let them know, not only about the choices they can make about eternity, but even the choices they can make about how they'll live their life here on earth.

Since none of us were born without a free will – the power to choose, that means that, regardless of how you've lived your life up to now – regardless of whether you've been a leader, a follower or just an observer who neither leads nor follows, the good news is that you have options – you have choices. If you're still breathing, then you have a choice – it ain't over yet – so CHOOSE!

Now, for today's teaching:

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Ecclesiastes 9:4 (NKJV) But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

That means that, even if I don't feel that I'm a lion YET, if I feel like a dog, in comparison to some of the great "lions" of history, I still have an advantage over them if they have died, because even if I'm only a dog, I'm a LIVING dog. That means that I still have choices – options. And the power to choose offers hope, that I can change my tomorrows with the choices I make today.

Many of you have heard my teaching titled, “Getting A Message To Garcia – A Study In Excellence”. In that teaching, I tell a brief story of a young man who worked in our offices. One day, as I passed in the hallway, I noticed him doing a terribly sloppy job of stacking boxes. In the ensuing conversation, as I asked him to stack them neatly, he informed me of the “reason” for his supposed inability to do his job with excellence, as he replied, “But that’s not my personality.”

And, as most of you know, I said, “CHANGE! You’ve got 5 minutes!”

Could he change his entire way of doing things – his entire approach to work and life in only 5 minutes? No!

But, he COULD make the DECISION – the CHOICE in 5 minutes!

And it all starts with a decision! It all starts with a choice!

So now, let’s look at you – your life – your self-image.

If you’ve read much of my teaching on Leadership, then you know that I believe:

- You’ll never be a General until you can be a good Private.
- You’ll never be a great leader until you are a good follower.
- You have to be prepared to sit down and LISTEN to someone else. Now, you may feel that you’re smarter than them – better looking – have more friends – better people skills – have greater credibility and influence, etc. But you also have to admit that they’ve achieved something which you haven’t achieved. So, in regard to THAT, they know more than you, which makes you the student, and them the teacher. You must be prepared to ask them to tell you what to do next – to tell you what you need to change about yourself, in order to be as successful as they are. When they speak, you write – take notes – not because you necessarily agree with everything they say, but because there is ONE FACT that you cannot deny: they are more successful than you are, and because of that, you are willing to learn from them, because you know that if you do not HUMBLE yourself, and become the student, you will never learn what they know, which could be the key to your own success.
- You must be prepared to say: “There is one thing that I cannot deny – you have achieved much more than me, and because of that, I’ve decided to be teachable – to listen when you speak – to learn from you – to be willing to change the way I think – the way I conduct myself – the way I treat others. Because there is NO DOUBT that you are MUCH more successful at THIS than me! So now, I’m going to SHUT UP and LISTEN as you talk. And I’m going to write down what you say, and then I’ll go out and follow your directions – your counsel, because as much as I hate to admit it, you really do know more about this than I do. So you lead, and I’ll follow, because I’ll never be able to lead until I’m willing to follow.”

- The problem is that so often, when people start out in a new venture, too often, they want to “enter” at a “leadership level”, instead of being willing to start at the bottom with everyone else and work their way to success.
- That’s like going to sign up for the military at the Recruitment Center and being asked, “Which branch of the service would you like to join?” and you reply, “It doesn’t matter which one. I’m happy to be an Admiral or a General – whichever branch needs my expertise the MOST!”
- That’s like trying to be a grandparent without having children! You have to do one before the other is even possible.
- So, before you can EVER become a leader, you MUST be a good follower FIRST!
- Just because you’re original and unique, that doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re a leader. It may mean that you’re weird!
- Original and Unique is a nice way of saying WEIRD!
- It doesn’t mean that you’re a leader.
- You’ll never be a leader ‘til you become a good follower!
- Remember, the whole concept of being a leader is precipitated by our willingness to become the person who others WANT to FOLLOW.
- If others see you only as an arrogant, selfish manipulator, who cares little, if any, for others, they will have absolutely NO desire to follow you.
- And we should continually remind ourselves of the fact that a leader is one who others WANT to follow.
- If people only follow you out of fear, then you are NOT a leader.
- You are ONLY a leader when people voluntarily choose to follow you.
- So, if your goal is to be a leader, then you should CONSTANTLY ask yourself, “If I do this or that, would people want to follow me? Would I want to follow someone who is like me?”
- These questions will help us to maintain a level of honest, introspective insight, which will enable us to anticipate missteps on the path to becoming a great leader.

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