

11.25.19 - Leadership

Naturism seems to be an area where a husband and a wife can often disagree. We recently received a statement from a wife to the effect that she did not believe her husband was leading the family properly for Christ because of his stand regarding naturism. His leadership for Christ was being judged by what she thought was right, rather than being compared to the absolute and objective standard of the Word of God. Unfortunately, this is not an unusual problem. A few minutes listening to the news will show that it is rather a widespread problem. Most leaders are judged by whether or not their leadership is in agreement to the way things should be done based on the opinions of those being led, rather than an objective standard.

First, let us look at why we need a leader. On a very basic level we need a leader to give the group some direction. If we have a work group with 5 members and 7 jobs that can be done in any order, but the whole group needs to work together on each job, they cannot all decide which job to do first. It is very likely that each one would like to start on a different job first. Without a leader they would waste a lot of time coming to an agreement. If they did not come to an agreement, they would try to do several of the jobs at one time, which would leave them shorthanded, wasting time and maybe even affecting safety. Ideally, a leader would pick a job to do first and assign tasks within a few minutes and work would begin. If like imagined above they all wanted to start a different job first, then 4 of them are unhappy with the choice made by the leader. They usually take that as part of having someone else lead you. If the leader does not have some control, power, authority over the 4 unhappy workers and they do not submit to his leadership then we are back wasting time deciding which job to do first and we have no leader unless one of the unhappy workers is uniting the other three for a united front then he is in conflict with the appointed

leader for the position. The leader forces the 4 unhappy workers to start the job of his choice. If they are still unhappy and decide to do a poor job or a slow down or whatever else they can think of to express their unhappiness, then they are still working way below optimum level. Their behavior would be rebellion not submission. If they cannot be encouraged or forced to work can we say that the leader is not leading? Maybe if he did not use the power available to stop the rebellion. He could make wise use of all the power available and still have rebellious people that will not work. This illustrates most of the problems that we will expand on below.

God did not wait till He had a lot of people on earth to set up a chain of command or appoint a leader. **Gen 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.** With a group of two, God appointed a leader. It could be assumed from this verse that we all need some human to lead us. Imagine how a football team would play if all the players on the field could do whatever they wanted to do. You would not come to the game even if it was free. Football is only a game and it needs a leader for each team. Why do we think family, work, government or church can function with everyone doing as they like?

The ideal above where the workers do as they are told is the most common situation. Most workers know when they take a job that they will need to do as the leader/boss determines. Fortunately, you can typically get a job somewhere else if the boss is too difficult to work for. The boss is not just an order giver, he is a servant of the employer trying to make as much profit as possible by keeping costs as low as possible and production as high as possible with workers whom the employer pays to help make a profit. The boss also needs to be a servant to

the workers helping them to get the most work done while they are on the job in order to increase profits.

Submission is: *Resignation; a yielding of one's will to the will or appointment of a superior without murmuring.* As long as you are in agreement with the leader and do what is asked there is no submission, there is agreement. When you think the leader is wrong or you think the task should have been assigned to someone else or you think the task could be done better a different way, etc. now is when you need submission. Without submission we have no leader and we have anarchy (they did that which was right in their own eyes). Submission is as important as leadership. God is much more likely to protect followers/workers/wives who are submissive than those who are in rebellion. It is not the leader's job to woo you into submission, nor is it forbidden. It is not his or her job to vex you either, but that is often earned by your behavior. If you give the leader a hard time, they may look for a chance to return the treatment. Submission means you do not think the leader is leading correctly, but you choose to follow anyway and with a sweet spirit. If you think the leader is right it would not be submission, once again it would be agreement. Submission only kicks in when there is disagreement, but you follow anyway and with a sweet spirit. It is not submission if you do everything you can think of to express your unhappiness, that is called rebellion.

Here is another hypothetical work story: A contractor gets a bid to build an outdoor stage for a concert. He and his foreman discuss ways to do the job. Good leadership idea. They each have a way to do it and after promoting their methods and pointing out the weaknesses of the other person's method, the contractor decides to go with his method. Instead of submitting, the foreman resorts to pressure for his method. His threats are bad enough and time is too short to do the job without him, so they do the job the foreman's way. Is the contractor leading in

this case? It looks to me like he was forced to submit which is not the job of the leader it is what is expected of the worker. If in the middle of the concert the stage collapses, who will they sue for the damages, the foreman because he insisted on his way or the contractor? I bet the lawyers will not even ask who wanted it done that way. The cost of rebellion is usually not restricted to the rebellious person. The damages could be enough to put the contractor out of business and all his employees are out of work. The other point illustrated by this story is that authority must go with responsibility. The contractor had the authority to insist on his way and fire the foreman if necessary. He allowed the foreman to lead under pressure. If the contractor could see that the foreman's method would not work, he shouldn't have agreed to it. That is the hard part of leadership, you need to predict what will work or what is the best way to do the job, put up with pressure to change and if it works, that is what is expected of you, if it does not work you are at fault not your rebellious workers. The foreman should be looking for a new job regardless of how the stage survives the concert. The contractor will avoid getting in such a tight spot again with this foreman.

Leaders should not be dictators for several reasons. No one has a monopoly on good ideas i.e. no one is always correct. It may be that the person who does the task had time to think of a better way to do it. He will not share that with a dictator. Handing out orders makes workers feel put down and makes them dependant on your orders. This can lead to rebellion because of the criticism and little or no work if you are not present. As many decisions as possible should be made by the person doing the work. The leader should be more of a councilor than a boss. He should give direction on new tasks or on tasks that are difficult for the worker, otherwise the worker should lead in his area. The leader should only need to make the decisions that cannot be made within the group i.e. 5 people wanting to start a different

task when all are needed on each task. In a small business this could be a training job for a competitor you say. That is possible, but if it happens you already have a group of customers and he has none. If you are doing the job right at a fair price you will be able to keep most of your customers. If you are not as efficient as possible or shorting the customers in some way, he will be a blessing for the customers and a strong reason for you to correct things. He would only try something like that if he sees enough work for both of you or how to improve on what you are doing and you will not change. Competition is not a bad thing. It keeps prices down and quality up and you are more likely to do your best if you have competition.

How should a leader be judged? Disagreement is not the test! It is almost a given that a leader is going to generate disagreement. What about success rate? Did he win more battles/games/contracts than he lost? I am sure the Monday morning quarter backs think they could have made better choices and helped the team score more points. Many people in a group play the same game, they say what would have worked better looking back, which is much easier and more accurate than looking forward, and judge the leader's success rate poorly. They believe if they were leading, things would be much better so the leader is doing a poor job. I am reminded of the story of a worker who always knew much more about how to lead than the boss. He was willing to share his opinions with anyone who would listen. He was frequently looking for another job and the companies that sent him looking did fine without his "superior skill at leading".

What about leadership style? This is another test that is going to be colored by the likes and dislikes of the person doing the judging. Also, the job will limit the style of leadership that is best. If the choice needs to be made quickly and acted on immediately then someone who can make a quick choice, gives

orders and work gets started is a good leader. If the work is a collection of small groups working on routine jobs, then getting an occasional report from the groups might be a good style. I do not know of a good test that a worker would not slant towards the bad leader side because things are not done the way he thinks they should be done. Yes, there are bad leaders.

King Saul was a bad leader. He lacked self confidence and made decisions slowly or when forced to do so in many cases. He was more concerned about his image in the eyes of the people than doing what was best for the people. He saw David as a threat instead of a benefit to his kingdom. He wasted a lot of resources chasing David around in the wilderness. Arrogance is very common in bad leaders. They feel that they are the only reason the group they are leading is doing so well. This attitude cuts the leader off from any helpful suggestions from the group. The group might follow an order that they know will end in failure just to make the leader look bad.

What do you do if your leader is a bad leader? This depends on the area we are talking about. If it is your husband and you made your position clear in a respectful manor, then prayer and submission are the godly choices. Your position is for life and God wrote no provisions to get out of the contract. Let's also assume that you tried to see the decision from his point of view. I know that it is unlikely that you are wrong, but it also happens on occasion that the husband is right. You can safely assume that he thinks he is right. The subtle and not so subtle methods of expressing your unhappiness is not submission, but rebellion. It sets up a contest to see who's will wins, which has no place in any organization and especially not in marriage.

There is no leader who does not need to submit to someone or some group. The self-employed person is said to have no boss, but if he does not do what his customers expect he will be

looking for a job with a boss, in other words the customer is his boss. The CEO has a board of directors or stock holders as their boss. Even the dictator of a country fears the people and is careful not to offend them too much at one time to prevent uprisings. The family is no exception. The children are to honor (obey if still dependent and living at home) the parents. The wife is to submit to the husband as indicated in the verse above from Genesis and the one below: **1Co 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman [is] the man; and the head of Christ [is] God.** This verse clearly shows where leadership and submission fit in God's chain of command. Note that God is the only one who does not submit. Also note that the Pastor does not have a position in this chain. He should not, cannot and does not come between God and the husband. The husband does not submit to the Pastor, the Pastor does not rule the husband. It should also be obvious that the Pastor should not advise the wife against the husband's leading with the possible exception for physical abuse.

If the leader is your Pastor, you should set down with him alone and express your concerns and try to come to some understanding. If he will not hear you, pray for insight for each of you on God's position on the conflict. I am assuming that the leadership problem is greater than your naturist beliefs. We do not recommend sharing these beliefs unless reasonably sure the person is open to the idea or someone asks a question that can not be bypassed without lying. If the church is rigidly textile as many are, you will be sowing discord by promoting the naturist position. If you are very sure God sees it your way and the issue is big enough to justify leaving the church, then look for another church. We have found that you cannot fix a church that has gone bad. Jesus cursed the fig tree to illustrate the future of the Jewish "church". Even Jesus did not try to fix His church.

If the bad leader is your boss at work, then try a humble private meeting to suggest ways to make things better for the boss or the company and if possible, leave yourself out of the suggestions. If that does not help, then you need to decide if the problem is large enough to change jobs over and act accordingly. Every boss is going to do something that you do not like. All of this should be done with a lot of prayer. Sharing your discontent with everyone in the company/church/home is a form of rebellion and God is not likely to bless it.

The bottom line is this; God appointed leaders and we need leaders, but we will not always agree with the leaders that God has placed in our lives. When this happens the true test of our faith is not in whether or not we believe in our leaders, but whether or not we trust God to see us through when we submit to our leaders even when we think they are wrong. Submission is a faith issue. Do I trust God to bless and protect me when I follow a leader that I disagree with?

Submission is disagreement, but following anyway with a sweet spirit. It is not a door mat...it is not the absence of an opinion...it is the presence of faith and of trust. Trust that ultimately God is in charge no matter who the appointed leader is.

Lastly, let's be sure to make our judgments based on an objective standard such as the Word of God, not the opinions of man...even our own. If the leader is clearly in direct opposition to the Word of God or another objective standard then we may need to seek a new leader, but only after much godly counsel and a lot of prayer and fasting.