

Tools for Wise Leadership

A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

Series 13: Leadership Stewardship

Talk 04: Stewardship of Mind and Emotions

Welcome to the programme Tools for Wise Leadership.

We are focusing on the issue of stewardship in Christian leaders. We defined stewardship as management of someone else's affairs or property and we are exploring the implications of this definition.

In previous programmes we articulated various principles of stewardship including the need for a steward to fulfil the purpose intended by the owner or giver. Today we discuss the application of this principle to the stewardship of our minds and emotions. Now here is a question for you as a leadership steward. Are you using your mind and emotions for the purpose intended by the Lord, the giver of that mind and those emotions?

Firstly, we are told to love God with all our hearts and all our minds. This means many things. Among other things, this means our hearts or emotions and our minds must be pre-occupied with the things of God. This has to be a deliberate choice. We can choose to be preoccupied with the things of this world, or we can choose to be preoccupied with the things of God. Whatever preoccupies our hearts and emotions will define the agenda of our lives. Even a Christian can be very much preoccupied with the things of this world and have his or her agenda defined by the world – or by God. Jesus consistently refused to have his agenda defined by the world. Had he agreed to set his mind on the things of man and be defined by man then he would have thought that Peter was doing him a favour when he said, "Never Lord. This suffering shall never happen to you." But instead of saying, "Peter, you are a very nice, considerate man, Jesus says, "Get thee behind me Satan. You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

So there is a sharp contrast right here. Peter at this moment had in mind the things of men and not of God. It was the world, and not God defining his agenda. Jesus, on the other hand was preoccupied with the need to fulfil his God-given agenda.

But how do you become preoccupied with the things of God? Psalm 1 says "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." You see, when you shun evil company and choose to meditate on the Word of God day and night you will have already fulfilled this condition of being preoccupied with the things of God. And as this Scripture says you will then be a really blessed person.

Next, stewardship of our minds means that we must love studying and learning. A Christian leader should always be improving his mind through study. First we must concentrate on studying the Word of God. Paul says "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Many Christians are blown by every wind of doctrine. But we must be like the Bereans who in Acts 17 examined the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul was so. So even when it was Paul who taught them, they still examined Scriptures to check if what Paul taught was the truth.

Then stewardship of our minds should extent to a diligent study of all other areas of knowledge, not just the Bible. We have an excellent example from Daniel and his 3 friends as recorded in Daniel 1. It is said

Tools for Wise Leadership, Series 13: Leadership Stewardship

In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

These young people did not despise so-called “secular learning”. I really wish Christian leaders would have this same kind of attitude. We need to be people of excellence in our learning, not only the Bible but in all other fields as well.

The next thing about stewardship of our minds and emotions is that we must think positive thoughts. Proverbs 23:7 states, “As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.” Our thinking pattern also determines whether we win or fail. Indeed as Maxwell states, the battle is often won or lost before it has begun, depending on our frame of mind when we enter the battle. You remember the story of the 12 spies who were sent out by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan before the Israelites crossed the Jordan. They greatly differed in their attitudes. Joshua and Caleb came back with a positive report. The other ten spies returned with a negative report. They said the Anakites were so big and threatening that the Israelite spies were like grass hoppers even in their own eyes. While Joshua and Caleb were optimistic about the future the others 10 were pessimistic about the future. It is therefore much more than a cliché to say your attitude determines your altitude.

This is obviously the reason why Paul in Philippians 4:8 Paul wrote:

And now, dear brothers and sisters, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Can you imagine that such positive words were written from prison? Prison is a normally a depressing place to be in. Yet Paul’s letter to Philippians is a letter of joy. And this is very different from much of the normal thinking by the majority of leaders. Instead of seeing blessings, we tend to be like the 10 spies who were Catastrophisers. Instead of looking at the promised land as an inviting opportunity, to them it was a catastrophe. And of course such critical and negative thinking reinforces a depressed mood.

It is all a matter of perspective, isn’t it? What you see is what you get. Paul could have seen his imprisonment as a major problem which was preventing him from doing ministry. Instead he had a perspective that saw possibilities in the midst of an otherwise difficult situation. He even says in chapter 1:12, “What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.” Now how can Satan win? Paul had already won the battle in the mind.

My friend what we have emphasized in this programme is stewardship of our minds and emotions. We need to add value to ourselves and to God through the way we use our minds and emotions. We do this by loving God with all our minds and hearts. We do this by studying the things of God so that we can rightly divide the Word of Truth like the Bereans did. But we also do this by excelling in all other kinds of studies like Mathematics, Literature and Science. I think Christians must be like Daniel and his friends who in all matters of learning were found 10 times better than the Babylonians. But finally remember we are what we think. We must be good stewards of our minds and emotions by thinking positive thoughts and choosing to feel positive emotions. What a way to add value to ourselves, and to the kingdom of God.

Now that you know these things blessed are you when you put them into practice. So until I meet you in the next program please practice these Tools for Wise Leadership.

Tools for Wise Leadership, Series 13: Leadership Stewardship

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