



The Established Heart

God's Word and Wisdom for Pastors

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Team Building PART ONE

By Walker Schurz

Looking back on my life in ministry and observing the lives of other leaders, I see many common problems. One is that many with a true mandate and anointing from God seem stressed and overworked. Some brag about it as if it is positive. "I'd rather burn out than rust out" is not a sustainable way to live, yet this becomes the norm for so many.

Why do we live this way? It could be that we have embraced a dysfunctional model of ministry – doing it alone. A true vision from God will always be at a scale that one person cannot accomplish by themselves. Throughout God's word, when God's plans are accomplished, they happen with groups. God works with teams.

Moses was one the greatest Biblical leaders recorded in scripture. He had great challenges that were overcome and he passed on a legacy to the next generation. While Moses had great success as a leader, he also faced the incredible frustration of trying to do too much without the help of others.

In Numbers 11:14, Moses cried out to God: "I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me." God's response was that Moses was to pick seventy elders from among the people. Then God said in verse 17, "Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them: and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you many not bear it yourself alone."

We see from this passage some of the benefits of doing ministry in this Biblical fashion are:

1. Others bear the load
2. The leader is saved from fatigue and stress

3. We create opportunities for new leaders to emerge
4. The leader grows personally
5. The leader will prosper and finish strong

Although God gave Moses this incredible leadership wisdom and plan in Numbers 11, we find him ignoring it to his own detriment in Exodus 18. The gap between knowledge and its application is one of the greatest in the world. Even though Moses knew what to do, he was in great distress when his father-in-law Jethro found him doing ministry alone.

After seeing Moses' workload and hearing his excuse that he is helping people with God's word, Jethro asks a question that demands an honest answer, "Why do you do this alone?"

Doing it alone has horrible consequences for both the leader and the followers -- both will be worn out (Numbers 17:24).

As a leader, we must answer this question ourselves – why do we do ministry alone? It could be many different answers for different leaders. It could be ignorance, lack of delegation skills, insecurity, pride, fear and misunderstanding of a leader's role or a host of other reasons. Search your heart with the help of the Holy Spirit and apply God's word. In future issues we will look at areas that will help us to minister as a team. 🌿



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Velvet ~ Covered Bricks

By John C. Maxwell

As a child, when I misbehaved, I was sure to receive “The Look” from my father. I have vivid memories of the furrowed eyebrows and pursed lips of The Look. It makes me shudder just to remember it. The Look could cut right through my body and penetrate into my soul. There was nothing comforting about The Look, and, invariably, it signaled impending disciplinary measures. The Look was to be respected, The Look was to be feared, and, above all, The Look was to be avoided.

However, just as I can recall The Look, I also remember the tenderness of my father’s care after he disciplined me. I remember the whispered assurances of his love for me. I remember the warmth of his embrace as he held me in his arms. I remember his tenderness as he gently explained why I had been disciplined and how I could learn from the experience. His was not mean-spirited or severe in his discipline; rather, his loving correction was intended to develop me into a man of character.

Leaders, like my father, must balance toughness and tenderness. My friend, Tim Elmore, describes these leaders as Velvet-Covered Bricks. They are firm and strong on the inside, but soft and pleasant on the outside. In this article, I would like to discuss the qualities that make a leader into a Velvet-Covered Brick. I am indebted to Tim Elmore for many of the thoughts in this lesson.

Tough But Tender

Some leaders are so tough they could chew nails, but their insensitivity prevents them from connecting with their employees. Ignorant of the emotions around them, they rely on authority and scare tactics to earn the allegiance of their team.

Other leaders go the extra mile to earn the admiration of those they lead. They love to be seen as the “good guy,” and they go soft on their team. To protect their popularity, they sacrifice healthy confrontation or neglect holding employees accountable.

A Velvet-Covered Brick leader makes difficult decisions, but at the same time, they act as emotional caretakers to the people their choices affect. They instill discipline, but they also provide encouragement and inspiration.

Confront Problems But Consider Perspectives

Velvet-Covered Brick leaders are not afraid to deal with conflict in order to iron out an unhealthy situation. By actively addressing problems, they are peacemakers as opposed to peacekeepers. At the same time, such a leader remains open to the perspective of others. Although supremely confident, a wise leader knows the fallibility of his or her judgment, and they turn an attentive ear to those who share differing opinions.

Committed to Results and Committed to Relationships

Leaders with a Velvet-Covered Brick mentality refuse to compromise goals or take the easy road out of tough spots. They relentlessly set the bar high so that the team achieves its potential. Yet, all the while, leaders value people just as much as productivity. They never sacrifice relationships simply to get results.

Professional and Personal

The Velvet-Covered Brick type of leader maintains an aura of professionalism in the workplace at all times. Such a leader stays poised in the most heated moments and keeps control of his or her emotions. While approachable, they reserve part of themselves (their fears, knowledge, insights) so that they can effectively motivate the team from a place of authority.

At the same time, leaders don’t want to come across as aloof, distant, or plastic. The best leaders are warm, genuinely interested in their teammates, and intentional in understanding what makes each person unique. Additionally, to connect with the team, they may show selectively disclose information about themselves or even let down their emotional guard during a meeting.

Take Criticism and Serve the Critic

Leaders who aspire to be Velvet-Covered Bricks develop thick skin and bypass the desire to retaliate against critics. Instead, they graciously accept criticism and welcome confrontation. Then, they take pains to win over their critics by reaching out to them. They go the extra mile to wade through conflict until resolution can be reached.

Respected and Approachable

A leader earns respect on the basis of what he or she has done. More often than not, respect is gained on difficult ground. Adverse circumstances test the mettle of a leader and show a leader's true merit. For a Velvet-Covered Brick leader, respect is balanced by approachability. An approachable leader has a consistent mood, is quick to forgive, willing to apologize, and shows authenticity. A leader at ease with himself puts others at ease. Secure leaders aren't constantly seeking validation from others, and, as such they are free to add value to those they lead rather than deriving value from the approval of those around them.

People are drawn to leaders who value them. They will approach a leader who makes them feel encouraged, helps them grow, and treats them honestly. 🌿



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WHAT THE ANOINTING IS NOT - PART ONE

By Tony Cooke

Duke Ellington, the late jazz musician, composer and renowned band leader, was once asked to provide a definition of rhythm. "If you got it," he replied, "you don't need no definition. And if you don't have it, ain't no definition gonna help." I think that same statement could apply to the anointing as well!

Sometimes, though, it's helpful to use the process of elimination in defining something. In other words, to define what it is not. For example, one individual had carved an elephant out of a block of wood. Someone asked him how he had done it. He said: "I simply carved off everything that didn't look like an elephant." Maybe we can "carve off" a few misconceptions regarding what the anointing is not.

1. The Anointing is not a Substitute for Preparation.

Some preachers have relied upon Psalm 81:10 when it comes to ministry: "I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it." In doing so, they neglected 2 Timothy 2:15, where Paul told his young protégé: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Spontaneity can certainly have its place, but so does study.

Ministers must not only prepare messages, they must prepare themselves to minister the Word of God. I believe that the anointing (the presence and working of God's Spirit) can be just as much a part of the preparation process as He is a part of the delivery process.

One minister noted that information and inspiration do not need to be in competition with each other. Donald S. Whitney said, "Why do we seem to think we must choose between the two? Why do so many Christians live as though they've been told, 'choose you this day whom you will serve: scholarship or devotion'? I maintain that a biblically balanced Christian has both a full head and a full heart, radiating both spiritual light and heat."

To be negligent in preparation, while expecting the anointing to bail you out at the last minute, is presumptuous. It will be evidenced by shallow preaching and results that are less than optimal. On the other hand, we shouldn't be so confident in what we have prepared that we are not trusting in the Holy Spirit or yielding to His influence when we do minister.

2. The Anointing is not a SHORT-CUT TO SUCCESS.

Some ministers (especially young ones) think: "If I could just get this great anointing, then I'd have it made. The anointing would propel me into great success." However, without other parts of their life and ministry being developed and matured properly, too much success could be ultimately detrimental.

Countless ministers have experienced a sudden burst of (seeming) success due to a unique or strong anointing, only to have their ministry shipwrecked because of a lack of development in other areas. Someone wisely said, "Your charisma can take you where your character can't keep you."

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There are no short-cuts (or substitutes) in ministry. Having an “anointing” doesn’t take the place of endurance, character development, growth in the fruit of the Spirit, honesty, humility, and possessing a servant’s heart. It would seem that some ministers have had the idea that because they have a certain type of anointing that they are somehow exempt from such biblical mandates as walking in kindness, holiness, integrity, etc.

3. The Anointing is not a Stamp of Approval.

A minister being anointed (or seeming to be anointed) is not a blanket endorsement of that person by God. It doesn’t mean they are accurate or correct in everything they do or say. Nor does it mean that they are necessarily even living right. Some ministers have lived in great sin, yet all the while their messages were anointed and people were getting saved and healed. Eventually, though, that sin will catch up with them. Jesus one time referred to giving an erroneous minister “space to repent” (Revelation 3:21). Some, in their deception and pride, have made the mistake of assuming that God is making some type of exception for them because their ministry is so important. They misconstrue His mercy as an endorsement, and then judgment comes.

4. The Anointing is not EXCLUSIVELY synonymous with a SPECIFIC STYLE.

1 Peter 4:10 refers to, “...the manifold grace of God.” It’s

important to realize that there are different expressions of God’s Spirit. People naturally have preferences. Some people love nothing but systematic teaching, while others would much rather hear inspirational preaching. Still others would like nothing but prophesying and other “spiritual” demonstrations. Some are blessed by soft, quiet music, while others are inspired by loud, energetic music.

Even though we may all have our personal preferences, it’s important not to become closed-minded, assuming that God can only work or move through the type or style of ministry (specifically, the one we enjoy and benefit from). We limit God by thinking He can only move through one style or one method. What is not “anointed” to you is exactly what God will use to reach certain people, and what is “anointed” to you may not be effective in reaching others.

I love the story of Elijah on Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:11-13). There were four different manifestations that took place: a powerful wind, an earthquake, a fire, and a still small voice. There have been times when God was in a powerful wind (such as on the day of Pentecost), but He wasn’t in this wind. There have been times when God was in an earthquake (such as when Paul and Silas were in jail), but God wasn’t in this earthquake. There have been times when God was in the fire (such as when Moses stood before the burning bush), but God wasn’t in this fire. This time, God was in the still small voice.

We’ve got to be careful about making automatic associations with the external, with stylistic issues or even with certain types of manifestations (especially those that can be imitated in the flesh) and truly be sensitive to Him!

When we are sensitive to Him and His leadership, we won’t get locked

into a rigid form that we just auto-matically repeat all the time. It’s interesting to me that the next-to-last verse of Psalm 46 says, “Be still and know that I am God.” While the very first verse of Psalm 47 says, “Shout unto God with a voice of triumph.” God can be in both the shout and the silence!

What the Anointing is?

Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, “John’s words ‘unction’ and ‘anointing’ are just a very graphic way of describing the influence and the effect of the Holy Spirit upon the believer.” Jesus was anointed (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38) and He even said:

“I can of Myself do nothing” and “...the Father who dwells in Me does the works” John 5:30; 14:10

Paul understood the anointing also, and said that he conducted his work in ministry by:

“...striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me.” Colossians 1:29

Next month we’ll share four other principles about “What the Anointing Is Not.” But in the meantime, we pray that you are strengthened by Him, knowing that He has not only called you, but has also anointed you for the work you are doing. 🌿



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