



Truth and Leadership: Bearing Fruit that Remains

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Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven. The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest. Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps. Psalm 85:10-13

Daily, as I watch TV or read the newspaper, I am reminded that we are in a battle. The values of the world are at odds with the truth of God's righteousness. Although at times it seems overwhelming, I feel privileged to be called to be a part of God's army. At Desert Stream, we plan and strategize in the hope of reclaiming the lost in Jesus' name.

As I consider the state of the world, I am deeply aware that neither my might nor strength will change anything. What God need from us is faith, not might. Our faith is in Him, in whom all things are possible.

And yet I am aware of many good faithful men and women who were not able to continue to serve Him in ministry, usually because of sin within their own lives. Faith in God is necessary to serve Him, but it is not enough. Equally important as faith is truthfulness before God and His church.

I believe that what is most precious to God is not our works but our relationship with Him and his bride. How often have we been confused by a leader's fall due to the evident fruit of their ministry? Yet fruitfulness can mask personal sin.

Sadly, some Christian leaders believe that what they are doing is so important that they are immune from the consequences of sin. But no one is that important. God doesn't need our ability to work as much as He desires us to grow in righteousness.

Our faithfulness and service is important, but even more important is our truthfulness before God. He wants us to be faithful to Him; He requires us to be truthful before Him and His church. God cannot bless for long that which is built on a faulty foundation. Either the faults need to be confessed and "submitted" for repair, or the foundation will crumble.

A few years back, Andy and I were spending time with another ministry couple who had a young family. Both were open about their past brokenness and about some of the difficulties they were having within their marriage. Even though it wasn't obvious, I sensed that the husband was putting forth a "good face". I felt that he was very troubled by things but that his pride was silencing him.

We approached him with our concerns and he insisted that all was well and under control. Still uneasy, we gave them several more chances to open up. There were even prophetic words from a trusted team member that there was some trouble. But the response from the couple was always one of assurance.

Only a few weeks later they come forth and revealed that there were great difficulties in their marriage. God exposed some concealed sin in a way that neither could control any longer. In truth, the stresses of marriage, ministry and parenting, mixed with their own deception and brokenness, proved too weighty. Their relationship cracked on its faulty foundation.

By the time they came forward, much had already been lost. They needed to be removed from leadership. They had not come forward truthfully as they had been calling others to do. (They confessed only after having been discovered.) Until their marriage was stronger and truthfulness worked within them, they could not lead.

I believe what grieved God the most was not the loss of ministry, but the lack of truthfulness before Him. Even after the truth came out, they had a hard time truly confessing all that was amiss. Had they been honest earlier, the Lord could have begun healing them, individually and as a couple.

Our pride and fear stops us from seeking healing. We falsely believe that as long as we look good and are producing fruit, God doesn't care what goes on in our hearts.

But effectiveness can't substitute for the truth. We must be honest before God and others about the true state of our hearts. Our faithfulness to serve Him must be coupled with personal righteousness. He will bless us with lasting fruitfulness only when we are truthful before Him and others.