

Weekly Blogs on Leadership

by Dr. Jay Zinn • 4/18/2016

Week 7

Two types of leadership styles

There is a time when a man lords it over others *to his own hurt*. —*Ecclesiastes 8:9*

During my life, I've been at the front row of observing what it's like to be under the authority of kind, gentle, and inspiring leaders versus autocratic, controlling leaders—both in the marketplace and the church. Controlling leaders have certain flaws in their character. They are usually dissenters and highly opinionated, believing their way is *always* the best way without deviation or consideration that they might be wrong. They're *un-teachable*. Therefore, they *have to* control and manipulate the people around them requiring them to get in line with the “party” spirit. They cleverly and frequently use the *principle* of submission and obedience to their authority (freely citing “submission” scriptures) so as to serve their agendas. Of course their approach to submission is based on the skewed deception that their delegated authority is *absolute* and not to be challenged or compromised. They manipulate through vehicles of fear, shame, and guilt upon those they lead. They hold the erroneous belief that the flock they rule belongs to them. Truth be told, spiritual leaders are delegated *under*-shepherds, appointed to feed and care for God's children, as long (or as little) as the Lord allows *his* children to remain under our care.

We need not look far to discover that Jesus is our best example of leadership qualities. He commanded, he taught, and he led strongly, yes—but never did he attempt to control people against their freewill. His leadership in people's lives was, and always has been, a style of *invitation*—not manipulation. Whenever people stopped following him, he didn't run after them to convince them to stay. They either saw the value in following his leadership or they didn't, but he never bullied or shamed them into submission. Never. He made people hungry, curious, and attracted to his leadership. His strong, but gentle, meek, and loving way drew them to him. He set himself apart from the stark contrast of the elite Pharisees who claimed authority by God, but controlled people through fear, shame, and manipulation through the letter of the law. Legalism was their tool, and it blinded everyone to God's love, that is, until his love became manifested through his Son, Jesus. True, authentic love does *not* control freewill. If you want people to follow you out of love and respect, freewill is the only way to accomplish that. You encourage them to freely *seek* God themselves. Encourage them to freely *feed* themselves. Encourage them to freely follow you or not since it is the Lord who places the members in the body *as it pleases him*. And if it pleases the Lord to rotate a member into another church [or business] as a new assignment to use them there, then that is his prerogative and we bid them on to their new assignment with our blessing.

Shepherding God's people well happens when we know that authority and influence delegated to any leader in the lives of others is a privilege, not a right. As a shepherd-leader, *I own no one*. I work as a steward in God's house as a facilitator of his care and blessings. The moment I begin serving and caring for God's people out of my own selfish ambition and agenda is the moment my credibility goes down the drain. For when they find out—and they will—you'll look behind you and find no one following. Unless they've been bound by the chain of fear on the “shame” train.