



Leadership Training for Leaders Inside and Outside the Church

“Leadership is the art and science of inspiring others to reach their full potential in the pursuit of a common vision”

Dr. James Bultman



Today's Scripture Reference

Nehemiah Chapters 1-4

I Corinthians 4:2

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The TCL E-Leadership Resource Are You Responsible for Anything?

In the days where TV programs like the Apprentice are shaping today's leaders, one must ask whether you have joined in the blame game or whether you take responsibility for the people you lead and the things you do.

A few days ago my wife and I went to Bakers Square for dinner. The chili I received was so cold that I expressed to the waitress that I was amazed the kitchen sent it out that way. It was not very busy in the restaurant and we already had some similar experiences in the past. The waitress apologized and returned to me a good hot dish. About ten minutes later she returned to talk and tell me that it was not the kitchen's fault it came out cold, it was hers. She just did not test it as she should have, thus she wanted me to know it was her responsibility. She came to our table to specifically tell us that she was responsible for the cold chili.

How many times does that happen in today's culture? Not many. However I saw a potential restaurant manager emerging in that young girl. While she still needed some growth in service, I gave her a good tip because of the responsibility she took.

Taking responsibility for one's self is one thing; taking responsibility for those you lead is another. Reflect for a moment on how Nehemiah began leading people toward the goal of rebuilding Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 1“O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, (...) ⁶let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. **I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you.** ⁷We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

Nehemiah began by confessing what his future followers did in the past! Friends it is not that he **was** responsible; it is because he was willing to **be** responsible ... a critical first step in becoming a good leader. Additionally, a true leader is willing to take the bullet for the team he or she is leading. Jesus took on the risk and consequences for us. Likewise, we must be willing take on the risk for those we lead.

This verse is underlined in my Bible.

I Corinthians 4: 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

About fourteen years ago this verse came alive when, as an experienced small group leader, I came to my small group meeting with a transparent heart. A couple hours before the meeting I had been stopped by a police man with such a rare and petty infraction that he took 10 minutes looking in his manual for the actual law I violated. My attitude did not help when, in the midst of his pettiness, I told him he was a jerk.

Hours later when I confessed this to my small group, I was caught totally off guard when an elderly woman in my group said with astonishment. “Ron, I cannot believe you did that, ... you are our teacher.” She said it with such sadness and conviction that it was like getting hit with a brick. That is the moment the verse in Corinthians jumped off the page and into my mind. I will never forget how I let that woman down. I was responsible for more than I thought. More than likely you are too.

Friends, not only do we need to be responsible but we need to take it on! You will find the word “blame” used where there are weak leaders. They worry about getting the blame all the time. You will find strong leaders like Nehemiah in places where leaders lay their lives down for their people, and who, not only take on the responsibility for themselves, but for others.

Reflect on who and what you are responsible for. Check the height of that bar, ... raise it a couple feet higher, ... then take it on!

Ron Porter
Founder – TheChristianLeader.org

