

“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 Scripture
Reference*

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

23. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.



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The TCL E-Leadership Resource Do You Have a Problem With Excellence?

My wife and I are different in our personal approach to excellence. She is as close to perfectionist as you get and I am an entrepreneur and business minded production person, closely monitoring the return on energy. Filtering these attributes through scripture and applying them to leadership is my purpose in writing today.

An example of the application of these attributes is the approach we take in raking the leaves. She will get into the corners of our 1 ½ acres and spend whatever time it takes to get a result she can find satisfaction in, usually down to the last leaf. I, on the other hand, see that 25% of the leaves are still in the trees. I know many of them will fall tomorrow. In fact, within hours the yard might have a new coat of leaves in varying degrees. With that in mind I hop on our tractor and mow/mulch as many as possible, holding back on my real good job until the trees are empty. I think she frowns on me from inside the house. When the situation is reversed, I wonder why she "wastes" so much energy. I think excellence is great, ... when it is needed.

Ponder with me for a moment the question for Christian leaders. When should we require excellence from those we lead? When should we encourage it? When do you replace someone who is falling short of expectations?

Before I go any further, let me exclude a portion of society or your followers that I am not talking about. These are the people that will always be part of the unemployed. They do not want to work or follow instructions, and some are just plain lazy. There is a segment of volunteers that frankly are not believers, and do not take their ministry seriously. These will never reach their full potential no matter how you lead.

No, I am talking about your average follower or employee that needs good leadership to produce work that reflects the next level of quality for them, while supplying you a level of quality that will sustain the purpose of your organization. I would suggest to you, that within this context, we require from those we lead the same level of perfection or excellence that God requires of us.

If you believe in progressive sanctification, (a life which increasingly reflects the life of Christ) you know that our perfection will never be achieved until Jesus returns, when (from our scripture above) "our whole spirit, soul and body is found blameless". Theologically this takes place first by being "justified" (declared righteous when we were not), then through the continuing transforming work of the Holy Spirit, and finally all because of the grace of God. In a lifetime wherein we, (especially us leaders) will always fall short, the Holy Spirit keeps inspiring us to be sanctified to the next level of our leadership ability. I would suggest to you that without the inspiring work of the Holy Spirit, you would cease to be a leader immediately. The pain of always falling short of excellence would be debilitating.

In the same way, it is the ability given within the spiritual gift of leadership that helps leaders continue to sustain their followers, while hopefully, they demand of themselves a certain level of excellence. A leader who observes and is conscious of their follower's attitude toward quality ... and who works toward improving that very attitude, will be much more effective in progressing their followers to the next level of excellence, through inspiring management skills. A good leader does things to improve the followers "belief" about quality. If you demand quality, it only reveals that you and those you lead think differently about quality. Keep demanding things of those you lead and you will lose respect, your environment will be a strain to work in, and people will eventually leave. Which kind of leader are you?

So is my wife's raking excellence better than mine? I would say both are valid. While my wife demands a level of perfection from her own work, I, as the family leader, don't drag her down by explaining to her how her energy could have been better used.

The trees in our yard are now almost barren of leaves. I mowed, raked and burned my final pile of leaves. While many leaves have now blown back into our yard from our neighbors, last week you could not see a single one of them under the new coat of snow. It was then that we both thought the yard looked perfect. Only God could bring perfection to our yard.

I suspect we would agree that in this journey of "excellence sanctification", we all will welcome that ultimate day of "perfection". Until then, may I encourage the business leader reading this to stress a level of quality that "exceeds the competition", and may the ministry leader realize that ultimately he/she is responsible to help grow people, not things, into the likeness of Christ.