

Spiritual Considerations...

Selected articles designed to assist in our Bible study and Christian walk.



Dave Phillips, editor

number 13

The Role that God has Assigned

Dave Phillips, Germantown

Our society is grappling with our respective roles. We have come to believe that if an individual has a leading part in making a decision, he deserves a greater amount of the benefit if the action is successful. We tend to idolize “leaders” and take “workers” for granted. This results in many desiring to be leaders and not many interested in serving. The old adage is true; we may have more “Chiefs” than “Indians.” Many want to score the touchdown; not many want to block and tackle to make a touchdown possible.

In 1 Samuel 30, David teaches us a great lesson on our roles. Having led some 600 men in battle, he comes home to Ziklag only to find that the Amalekites had conducted a raid in which they burned the city and kidnapped the families. Everyone was devastated, including David. The 600 men turned against their leader, David. He was responsible. They would make him pay by stoning him.

David turned to God for strength. With direction from God, David took the 600 men and pursued the Amalekites. When they came to the brook Besor, many of the men were exhausted. They had been battling for an extended time with no rest. 200 men could not go on. David left the baggage with these 200, and took the rest of his army and pursued the Amalekites until he found them. The Bible says he slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day (verse 17). David not only brought back all the families (no lives had been taken), but also brought back the spoils (sheep and cattle).

Now more trouble comes. When David comes back to the brook where he finds the 200 exhausted men, an argument breaks out as to who should share the profit. The 400 men directly involved in the battle quickly protest that the 200 men should not receive any of the spoils. You can almost hear them shout, “Give them back their family members and let them leave!”

But David is a real man. He addressed his warriors by calling them brothers. He said, “You must not do so, my brothers, with what the Lord has given us, who has kept us and delivered into our hand the band that came against us.” (1 Sam. 30:23) David knew that the real leader was the Lord and the only one responsible for praise and credit was God himself.

His additional comment is worth remembering – maybe even quoting. He said, “As his share is who goes down to the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage; they shall share alike.” Isn’t that tremendous? He recognized that even though roles differ, there is no difference in the rewards.

Every servant of Christ is important. I don’t have to lead to receive a blessing from God. In fact, if I can help someone else lead more effectively, the reward may be greater.

No one has an insignificant task. Everyone has a responsibility to use his God given talents in a way that will give glory to God and build up the church. The next time you feel insignificant (or even worse, made to feel insignificant by a thoughtless or careless comment), just remember that the one who stands by the baggage is just as important as the man or woman on the front lines.

Church Tips

John Gipson - Little Rock, AR

A tip of the hat to Lanny Henninger who wrote, “A little musing about Sunday evenings and why I think more of us should get together than we do. For one thing, worship is not unrelated to our pilgrimage; worship enables us to steer a safe course. And above all, Sunday evening is worship. True, it is a traditional hour, arbitrarily selected for one (or more) of several reasons. But it doesn’t become dispensable just because it’s tradition. In fact, I am of the opinion that character and life are anchored in traditional events and experiences, repeated often enough to leave indelible marks. No

one is suggesting that this practice (Sunday evening worship) is a divinely dictated requisite, but I do believe it has much more significance than a handy alternative for travelers, workers, and those who prefer to sleep in. Or because we've always done it. Evening worship brings us together (thus contributing to the common good) for worship and praise (hardly overdone items) and a word from the Lord (always timely). I think we should reclaim worship, spiritual growth, and nurtured faith. I invite you to join me in this enterprise."

Gipson, continues, "Where you sit makes a difference. Parents with small children tend to sit toward the back so they may take their children to the cry room without disturbing too many other folks in the assembly. That's understandable.

Many have discovered, however, that it's advantageous to sit toward the front of the building. For one thing, there are fewer distractions between you and the one who is breaking the bread of life. For another, it promotes a closeness of fellowship which does not exist when we are scattered out. And thirdly, it really helps in admonishing one another in songs, hymns and spiritual songs.

Why not give some of the front pews a chance? From what I hear, some of them are feeling neglected."

It is all in the mind

Gary Redding - North August, South Carolina

Nick was a strong, healthy railroad man. He got along well with his fellow workers and was consistently reliable on the job. However, he was a pessimist who constantly feared the worst.

One summer day, the crews were told they could quit an hour early in honor of the foreman's birthday. When the other workmen left, Nick the notorious worrier, was accidentally locked in a refrigerated boxcar that was in the railroad yard for repairs.

He panicked. He shouted and banged until his voice went hoarse and his fists bloodied. His noises, if anyone heard them, were assumed to be coming from a nearby playground or from other trains backing in and out of the yard.

Nick reckoned the temperature in the car was zero degrees. "I can't get out of here," he thought. "I'll freeze to death." He found a cardboard box. Shivering uncontrollably, he scrawled a message to his wife and family. "So cold," he wrote, "Body's getting numb. If I could just go to sleep. These may be my last words."

The next morning, the crew slid open the boxcar's heavy doors and found Nick's body. According to the autopsy, every physical sign indicated he had frozen to death. But the car's refrigeration unit wasn't working. The temperature inside was about 61 degrees and there was plenty of fresh air. Nick's worst fear had become reality. "Dennis Waitley, *Empires of the Mind* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1995), p. 126. As incredible as it may seem, what I have just told you is a true story.

I used to play golf with a friend who loved to break the concentration of those with whom he played. When he succeeded, it gave him a definite advantage. I remember one game when he did his little psych job on us. "Do you guys breathe in or breathe out during your back-swings?" he asked innocently. We knew what he was doing, but we couldn't put the question out of our mind. We either ended up thinking about it, or deliberately trying not to think about it. No one had a good round that day - except that friend.

The point of both stories is this: once the brain has locked on to an idea, escaping it is almost impossible. In other words, if you think about everything that can go wrong, it will overwhelm you. So, keep your eyes on the ball and your mind on the goal. It's a piece of advice that can be applied to any area of life. Don't talk yourself out of success or greatness. Far worse than letting someone else tell you that you can't do something is telling yourself that you can't.

Church Growth

The Oak Leaf - Great Oaks church, Southaven, MS

"The darkest hour in the history of a church is when we sit down and try to figure out how to grow without working."