

CELEBRITY OR OBEDIENT?

There are many times when we might have read Mark 1:16 – 38 and would have been amazed at what the Lord Jesus did in his ministry. He called the disciples, and then immediately went into Capernaum to minister the Word, and to also meet the needs of the people, with many examples of his miracle working power being evident. Yet, in all of this, I wonder if we have ever stopped to think how this might have affected a new follower like Simon, and how we might react today.

It is only human to think that with such a manifestation of the power of God, that the city could have been considered as the possible headquarters of Jesus' ministry. Instead, you will read, that in the midst of this mighty move of God, Jesus went away to pray alone, and then in the Scriptures we read that **he left the city**. Simon, and the other followers caught up with Jesus, and said that there were many who needed him, but in reply, Jesus said that there were other towns that needed his ministry. How many of us today, would have been prepared to just walk away from such a great opportunity in Capernaum, and start afresh in another place?

Celebrity Status

We read ([Hebrews 4:15](#)) For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. Quite correctly, we interpret this to relate to temptation such as lying, cheating and adultery, but have we ever stopped to think about the internal sins, such as envy, covetousness, jealousy and egotism? Jesus was also tempted in these hidden areas. The entire town was talking about the miracles, and the authoritative teaching. From an anonymous carpenter to a celebrity in one day! Today, we could have used all the successes to publicise our ministry, and encourage financial support for this mighty work in **Jesus name**. Jesus bypassed all these wonderful opportunities, and possibly showed, that the Western world concept of success based on **size, speed and public exposure** is not God's standard.

From a fundraising perspective, you are encouraged to give all the success stories, and how important your work is, so that you can get the finances to expand the ministry. Jesus **left the success behind, and went to another town**. Doorways of opportunity can quickly become a trap door. Opportunity and guidance are not the same, and Jesus proved this when he went to another town, as he complied with the principle of ([John 8:29](#)) for I do **always** those things that **please him**. This should be our principle for all situations. **Always please Him.**

Jesus dwelt in that realm, where he wanted to do what his father wanted, which meant there was no room for ego, prestige, or position. Like Jesus, we need to be led by the Holy Spirit, and allow the Spirit to search our hearts, and reveal to us the things that we do in the name of Jesus, that are not in accordance with God's will for our lives. Through the love of Christ, we must seek to do everything in line with God's will, even if it means giving up opportunities that enhance our leadership standing. We must have the courage to say no to a coveted opening, knowing that by doing so another leader might fill it and reap the rewards.

Reasons why we reject the Jesus model

First, the nature of servant leadership goes against the grain of human ego. We view others as being proud of their positions or abilities, whilst we carefully ensure that we remain at the top of Christian endeavour. We should be embarrassed by the competing claims of Christians to be on the cutting edge of what God is doing. How many cutting edge ministries can there be? How does this line up with servant leadership? Phrases such as "I just want to serve," or, "I just want to be a nobody for Jesus" are

many times statements saying that we are in fact the opposite and proud of it. We need to beware of hidden agendas. There is no glamour in the hidden work of service.

Secondly, we miss the Jesus model because we concentrate on a worldly incentive to look good at all costs. To the world, appearance counts more than reality, and the grander we talk, the more people view us as being successful. Today, we have books telling us to dress to look successful. Look a winner even if you are not one!

Thirdly, we have become obsessed with packaging, such as formulas and techniques that can be called the key to leadership, or success, power or the miraculous. We then use the key as the slogan to start a movement complete with teaching tapes, bookmarks etc. Advertising is not wrong if it is not **man centred**, not **self-glorifying**, and not **ego inflating**.

A leader can have a sense of destiny and ambition, if we mean a God ordained calling and direction. It is possible for us to be so busy proving that we are a special vessel that we forfeit the anointing to lead. The initial calling might be from God, but unchecked ego can pervert the call. Destiny bound to ego degenerates into empire building, and empire builders have a tendency to lose God in their vision.

To follow Jesus we must not build a ministry around ourselves but rather choose to surrender to the will and pleasure of God on a moment-by-moment basis. Leadership pleasing to God is reserved for those servants willing to enter the domain of divine dictate, forfeiting opportunities for advancement in the process.

The Deceitful heart

There are five elements in the makeup of man that cause us from being what Jesus wants for us:

Status: This has to do with privilege and is characterised by special titles and rewards by virtue of position or standing. If you expect preferential treatment because of your status you have been seduced from being what Jesus wants as a servant leader.

Name-dropping: A person who informs others of such things as important invitations he has received, or famous persons he knows is deeply insecure and this insecurity will cloud his motives.

Defensiveness: This is the twin of arrogance. Arrogance can be defined as the unwillingness to be corrected or checked. The person closed off from reproof is determined to run things according to his personal desire.

Self-promotion: Vain ambition is at the heart of the need to promote ones own ministry. People become pawns or contacts who are used to further the leader's credibility or reputation. Using people in this way is not always a conscious act, but is part of establishing a ministry based on the sand of human effort.

Using the end to justify the means: Compromising ethical integrity starts out as just "a small thing" particularly in fiscal matters. In trying to get the message out the leader suppresses the still small voice of the conscience to keep the ministry going.

For Jesus Capernaum represented a prime opportunity to start his ministry and one of the greatest tests for any leader is the ability to walk away from Capernaum as Jesus did. Can we follow his example?