

neoLeader retreat

QCCC Tamborine
15 – 17 November 2008

John Sweetman – David

David's preparation:

- David got the worst job (shepherding) because he was the youngest
- He got a reputation as a musician and a warrior through practice, and long hours in the fields by himself.
- David developed intimacy with God in an era without the Holy Spirit!

1. Youth

- In some people, leadership is obvious from the start; in others, it is latent and takes time to show up. Even his own father couldn't see it in David.
- No matter what situation David was in, he made the most of it.

2. Call

- When Samuel looked at all of Jesse's sons, he was looking for Saul. God had to explain it to him the hard way.
- If God calls you to something, it will be too big. If it's not too big, you haven't understood God's job for you right. You should be quaking at the prospect of it. No one is big enough for the job to which God calls them.
- Why the contradiction? God looks on the heart, not the outward appearance, but David was specifically mentioned as handsome.
- The Holy Spirit came on David from the time of his anointing (1Sa 16.13). For David, this was likely about the power that the H.S. brings (cf. Ac 1.8).
- It was 15 years before he became king in Judah, and 23 years before he was king of all Israel.

3. Early successes

- The armour-bearer was not only the king's helper, but an important member of his personal guard.
- Rapid rise in authority and success.
- Had an awareness that he was God's agent, and with that came the confidence to act.
- Ready to step out and face whatever came.
- Ready to take on new roles – even though he was hired as a musician, he accepted the adjustments in his role.
- God's renown was his focus.
- Did not let the circumstances get in the way of his knowledge of the principles he lived by.
- Goliath had sword, spear, and javelin; David had no plan B.
- Good attitude: even though he rose quickly, people still loved him.
- What about the going around and asking about the reward? (He may have been trying to challenge all of them to take up the challenge.) [When he made it through the whole army, he knew that no one else was man enough to take up the challenge, and that he had to do it.]
- Friendships important in learning to lead. He vitally needed Jonathan.
- Sometimes there are times of great success, and this is good. Celebrate successes. Make sure you give the credit to God. You won't be successful forever, and you don't want to collapse when that happens.

4. Struggle years

- Hard times are going to come. Sometimes leadership just sucks.
- Found himself in places and doing things that he never wanted to, but still kept his integrity throughout.
- God was refining him; developing resilience.
- The powerful and the pretty and the influential who he was with in the palace were the ones who betrayed him. The outcasts, the hard-to-control ones, were the ones who followed.
- Abigail kept him from doing something that he would regret later on, encouraging him that God's hand was on him.
- Keep going, and don't attack those who are in authority, even if you think they're the bad guys. Sometimes people just won't like you.
- Learn to fail.
- Nothing happens that is outside God's plan. David had done nothing wrong at this point, yet he was the one persecuted and running.
- David may have pulled back from leadership from the perspective of simple self-preservation.
- John: leadership is a lifetime call, and we need to make sure that we do what is necessary not to burn out.

NOTE: While the story of David concentrates a lot on his failures, the rest of the Bible talks about how great he was!

Stuart Robert – Three Thoughts on Leadership

If you haven't got a clue how you behave in a situation, and you're ready to admit it, you are humble enough for leadership.

- Leadership is often about working with 20% of the information you need for outcomes which are not certain.
- There is no such thing as a born leader. Charisma and talent do not make leadership.
- Read this! Jim Collins, "Good to Great"

Three points from the three phases of his leadership (army, business, politics):

1. When in command, lead! Don't over-consult so that every decision is a good decision. You can decide not to engage, but you can't do nothing. Doing nothing gets you killed. Bad things don't get better over time. When you are ambushed from the left, if you do nothing, you're dead. Take responsibility when you do lead. Accept the risks, accept the outcomes. Leadership can be lonely.
2. Don't run – the team gets nervous. In Indonesia, the slower you walk, the more significant you are. Their culture doesn't reward nervous agitation. The last thing people want to see from a leader is excited frenzy, agitation, or panic. Don't ever raise your voice. Ever. "In China, whoever loses it first, loses it." You can lose years of credibility in one incident.
3. You set the tone for your team. "Whenever you do a media interview, you are one sentence from political oblivion." "Your microphone is always on." Your failure hurts everyone. The Mike Guglielmucci scandal meant that Christians in federal parliament couldn't do media releases for a week, because it was the only question on people's lips. Accountability is the only way to avoid failure, especially intense, systemic failure in your own life. You own your own reputation as a leader – you set the tone. Don't sacrifice the war to win a battle. (Relationships are one thing that are worth not sacrificing.) Better to be thought a fool than to open your mouth and prove everyone right.

Panel discussion – [Ruth Limkin](#), [Terry Harding](#), [Ben Naitoko](#), [John Sweetman](#)

Interview: Terry

- How you handle your successes is more important than how you handle your failures.
- Be ready to hire people more talented than yourself.
- Leadership is about self-government first, then family, then a wider sphere. You must have a strong marriage. You must guard first your marriage, and then your kids, and that will be the basis of your leadership.
- Self-discipline starts with basic Christian disciplines.
- Go with what you love. Phil 2.13
- Get with people who are better than you!
- You **will** see crucifixions.

Interview: Ben

- What are the key things that derail young leaders? Disobedience to God; being offended, majoring on the minors; isolation in leadership – leads to formation of warped values; unresolved sin – focus on performance rather than character.
- The key to enjoying ministry is learning to succeed, not just survive.
- Happy wife; happy life.

Question: How important is it to analyse your failures? If you think it's worth talking about, describe your greatest failure and what you learned from it.

- John: congregational decline at Bracken Ridge: failure doesn't mean you haven't worked hard enough.
- Terry: get with someone who can help you process the facts objectively, don't take yourself too seriously; people often are right in what they affirm, and often wrong in what they deny.
- Ben: most of the people who have a problem with authority have a bad/broken relationship with their fathers; breakdown in family unit is a huge contributor to the post-modern mindset.
- Ben: I'm in a capacity-building phase, which is another word for snowed-under, but God has something more for me in the future.

Ben Naitoko – Disciplines for every Christian leader

1. Time alone with God

- Psalm 1
- Ben prays in the morning – he finds it harder to prioritise everything in his days without it.
- If you want to fill a jar with rocks, start with the big ones! (We know this already, but we don't *do* it!)

2. Church service

- If we love Jesus, we must also love his wife!
- If we love the head, we must also love the body.

3. Our speech

- If we can discipline our mouths, we can discipline our destinies.
- When you are a leader, your words have a greater effect.
- The root of bitterness is unthankfulness.

4. Diet & exercise

- You limit your effectiveness by not being healthy.
- God wants you to last the race!

5. Rest

- The Sabbath is for man!
- We all need weekly rest and daily rest (sleep), annual rest (holidays)
- Ben talks like we are going to have a lot on our plate one day – that's because we are!

6. Celebration

- Make sure you're getting enough fun & enjoyment! Ne 8.10
- It is much easier to fall into sin if you're pushing it all the time. The stress builds up and comes out in inappropriate ways.

7. Moral integrity

- You live for others (as an example) not just yourself.

8. Finances

- Lk 16.11
- Tithing is not about money, it's about trust.
- Stewardship is about putting it where he says.

9. Family

- Firmly believes in the God, family, then ministry.
- God hates children being sacrificed on the altar of Molech, and every other God.

10. Personal development

- Maximise what God has given you!

John Sweetman – A Theology of Christian Leadership

Christian leadership is **follower-centred**. What does Christian leadership provide?

1. God's presence

- Reading from 2Ti 2: first part was about Grace, the rest was about hard work.

2. Security (through character)

- Character develops into wisdom over time.
- It's about being the same person in the dark as you are in the light.

3. Significance (through servanthood)

- The followers are more important than the task, agenda, or journey. Examples: Little thank-you notes, being involved with day-to-day life, phone call to offer prayer, celebrating successes (be generous!), connecting outside of ministry time (socialising).

4. Hope (through vision)

- We need them to know that what we do is going to make a difference for God.
- People need a goal.

5. Growth

- doing ministry together and reflecting on it
- Learning to challenge people about their lives
- Key question: What are you doing by yourself that you could be doing with someone else?

6. Empowerment (through team building)

- Teams often have to go through tough times before they can really succeed together.

This weekend, we're trying to achieve:

- A sense that being a leader is a good thing, and an awareness that we've got to keep growing.