



The Flesh Versus The Spirit

By Mervin Sundbo

You have all likely heard the story of the two wolves, but since it contributes to what I want to write about, I will relate the story to you once again.

“One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, ‘My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. One is evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.’ The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, ‘Which wolf will win?’ The old Cherokee simply replied, ‘the one you feed.’” Galatians chapter 6 speaks of the evil wolf as the works of the flesh (sexual immorality, impurity of mind, sensuality, worship of false gods, witchcraft, hatred, quarrelling, jealousy, bad temper, rivalry, factions, party-spirit, drunkenness, orgies, and things like that) and the good wolf as the fruit of the Spirit (love, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity, tolerance and self-control).

The battle spoken of here is as old as the history of man. Since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, the two wolves have done battle for the mastery of each individual – one evil, the other good. Paul spoke of this conflict in Romans chapter 7. “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do” (v. 19). After a rather long discourse on this dilemma of the two warring factions within him, Paul asks this question in verse 24, “O wretched man that I am! Who can deliver me from the body of this death?” And he comes to this conclusion in verse 25, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In other words,

there is only one answer to the question of who can deliver him from “the body of this death” or from the flesh wherein “dwelleth no good thing” (v.18). The answer is Jesus Christ our Lord. If we are honest with ourselves, we all have experienced and are to some extent are experiencing what Paul was talking about here. The answer for us is the same as it was for Paul. Paul looked for the same full salvation that you and I look for. “Who can deliver us from the clutches of this death?” The answer is unmistakable. The answer reverberates throughout the pages of God’s holy word. There is no other salvation than what God has provided through His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the answer. The songwriter put it this way:

Christ Is the Answer

Christ is the answer to all my longing.

Christ is the answer to all my needs.

*Saviour, Baptizer, The Great Physician-
O hallelujah! He’s all I need.*

When sin entered into the creation through the fall of man, we see through the account in Genesis 3 that presumably not very much time lapsed between the deception, the disobedient act and the results of that act. “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a

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tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Gen. 3: 6 & 7). There are several things to note about this scripture, but first of all, note that deception is often mixed with truth. Much more could be said about deception, but in passing let us simply say that the counterfeit is usually very close to the real, as is indicated by the following scripture, “For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect (God’s chosen people)” (Matt. 24: 24). A deceiver is skilled at planting the seed of doubt and inserting elements of truth into the deception. “Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die (a lie). For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’” (Gen. 3: 4). Here we see an out right lie (“you will not surely die”) and then a softening of the lie and an appeal to pride (“you will be like God, knowing good and evil”). Secondly, guilt or conviction is a normal and logical result of a sinful act. “Then the eyes of both of them (Adam and Eve) were opened, and they knew that they were naked ... and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord” (Gen. 7 & 8). In the pre-sinful state, Adam and Eve were naked but they were not ashamed. In the post-sinful state, they were ashamed of their nakedness, made coverings for themselves and hid from the presence of the Lord. This is a sad picture of the consequences of sin. There is first a feeling of shame or conviction and then a reaction to that by covering or hiding the sinful behavior.

From the time of man’s fall until this very day, the curse of sin is upon the world and none of it is hid from God’s all-knowing eyes. In 1John 2: 15 – 17, we see the pervasive nature of a sinful world, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh (sinful sensual pleasure), the lust of the eyes (covetousness, greed or materialism), and the pride of life (pride in one’s accomplishments or possessions), is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” Thankfully God has provided a way to deal with sin, not by postponing it as with animal sacrifices, under the law, but rather a way of dealing with it once and for all, through the death and resurrection of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

I mentioned earlier that it would seem from what

we read in Genesis that man’s fall from his idyllic state to the level of sinful degradation did not take very long and as a result of that disobedient act, all of mankind is conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51: 5). The wonder of it all, however, is that in God’s plan of redemptive love, He makes it possible for every repentant heart to move from degeneration to regeneration in a very short period of time. The born-again experience is instantaneous as witnessed by the account of the criminal who was crucified at the same time as Christ. “Then he (the criminal) said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.’ And Jesus said unto Him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you shall be with Me in paradise’” (Luke 23: 42 & 43).

I began with the story of the two wolves and it is the evil wolf that we want completely eradicated or starved from having any influence in our lives and this only comes by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit working in obedient and submissive hearts. There is a difference between the instant nature of salvation, which is an absolute must, and the complete transformation that God wants to bring to His people. The first step is essential, for without it there can be no transformation from the mind of man to the mind of Christ.

In the Nelson Study Bible, NKJV, there is an interesting note, which I will quote: “The Greek metamorphoo means ‘to change form,’ as does the English derivative metamorphosis. In the New Testament, this word is used to describe an inward renewal of our mind through which our inner spirit is changed into the likeness of Christ. Paul told the Roman believers: ‘Be transformed by the renewing of your minds’ (Rom. 12: 2). As our Christian life progresses, we should gradually notice that our thought life is being changed from Christlessness to Christlikeness. Transformation does not happen overnight. Our regeneration is instantaneous, but our transformation is continuous. We are conformed to Christ’s image gradually as we spend time in intimate fellowship with Him.”

I was reading from a daily devotional titled “Day by Day” by J. B. Phillips in which he expresses the concept that God is never in a hurry. This is what he says, “If there is one thing which should be quite plain to those who accept the revelation of God in nature, and the Bible, it is that he is never in a hurry. Long preparation, careful planning, and slow growth, would seem to be leading characteristics of spiritual life.... It is refreshing and salutary, to study the poise and quietness of Christ. He was never in a hurry, never impressed by numbers, never a slave of the clock. He

was acting, He said, as He observed God to act. He was never in a hurry” (pp. 178 & 179).

The journey that we have embarked upon is not yet complete. The destination is before us and we must never lose focus. We must never lose heart. As with any journey, there will be obstacles along the way. There may be potholes to watch out for, road construction may slow us down, the weather may not always be conducive to travel, travel weariness may set in and there may even be the odd unavoidable detour. However, the destination remains the same. The spiritual journey started with salvation and it will end with transformation. It began in spiritual infancy and it will end in spiritual maturity. Just as the complete man fell through the deception of the enemy, so the complete man will be restored through the redemptive work of Christ. The blood of Christ not only covers the sins of mankind, but it provides for his full salvation and transformation into the likeness and image of Christ. This is our destination! This is our heritage! This is our inheritance in Christ! The transformation that we look for with eager anticipation is a changed nature, different in quality from the old sinful nature. The new nature is the nature of Christ. “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4: 23 & 24, KJV). Hebrews 9:28 from the Phillips translation speaks of this full

salvation in this way, “Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many and after that, to those that look for Him, He will appear the second time, not this time to deal with sin, but to bring to full salvation those who eagerly await Him.”

We have a choice. We can be carnally minded or we can be spiritually minded. The former is death; the latter is life. In Deut. 30: 19, God says to Israel, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore chose life, that thou and thy seed may live.” While the extent of sin appears to be pervasive historically and in our modern society, the scripture in Romans 5: 20 & 21 puts it all in perspective with these words, “Now we find that the Law keeps slipping into the picture to point the vast extent of sin. Yet, though sin is shown to be wide and deep, thank God His grace is wider and deeper still! The whole outlook changes – sin used to be the master of men and in the end handed them over to death: now grace is the ruling factor, with righteousness as its purpose and its end the bringing of men to the eternal life of God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Phillips).

The songwriter penned these words and they are as true today as they were when they were written:

Transformed by grace divine,
the glory shall be Thine:
To Thy most holy will, O Lord,
we now our all resign.

Bone of His Bones and Flesh of His Flesh

By P.J. Mathew

It is true that every member of the body of Christ seeks to abide in the spiritual union of Christ. This divine unity is integral and it should be reflected in our personal experience with our Lord Jesus Christ. The church is the bone of His bones and flesh of His flesh meaning she is very intimate and inseparable from Christ. In the same way, husband and wife are united and they demonstrate the love and submission as exemplified in Christ and the church. In order to have such a deeper commitment to one another, as we read in Ephesians, wives should submit to their husbands and husbands should love their wives. Christ loved the church and gave His life to sanctify and cleanse her that He might present her to Himself a glorious church without any spot, wrinkle or any such thing. The church is being made perfect or

built up to be that pure and holy bride unto the Bridegroom who is Jesus Christ.

We read, “Wives, submit to your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; but it must be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nouris-

heth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body: of his flesh and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Eph: 5: 22- 33, KJV). Again, we read “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, for she was taken out of Man”” (Genesis 2: 21-24, KJV).

First husband and wife

It is vital to understand that God brought Adam and Eve together in the Garden of Eden and consecrated them as husband and wife. It is noteworthy to recall our basic Bible facts in (Genesis 2: 19- 20) that all the beasts of the field and birds of the air went before Adam, but he did not find a suitable companion of his heart’s desire in any of these creations, even though he saw them and named each one of them. Hence, God saw that it was not good for the man to live alone (Genesis 2: 18) and He created the woman who Adam would identify as his own to live together in love and harmony. Thus, the Lord God made woman out of the rib of Adam or woman was taken out of man and God brought her to Adam (Genesis 2: 22).

When Adam saw the woman, he knew for sure that she was his help meet. He discovered in her a new reality which was unseen in the animals, birds or any other creation. She resembled him with the same bone and flesh and he was able to connect and unite with her instantly. Adam accepted Eve to be his intimate person or as his own body.

The phrase “Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” is a heartfelt expression of Adam’s joy and also an intrinsic revelation of Eve. He realized that she was not just another beast or bird but his own reflection and he found her complementing his own persona.

It is significant to internalize the fact that when God brought Eve to Adam, he said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” because he was fully contented with Eve and they were united in body, mind and spirit. Consequently, Jehovah God conducted the marriage of Adam and Eve in the act of giving Eve to Adam. A remarkable union of the first man and woman took place in the sovereign will of God at the altar of the Garden of Eden. The divine appointment and destiny filled Adam’s lonesome life with a new horizon of hope, purpose and security. Therefore, it is crystal clear that God instituted the ordinance of marriage between man and woman, which is not invented by anyone but established by God long ago with a purpose and there is no other alternative to it. The purpose of this holy ordinance is to raise a God-fearing family and to preserve the world of mankind in the design of God on earth.

We read here that the woman was created to be a help meet for Adam. “Adam was first formed, then Eve (1Tim. 2: 13). If a man is the head, she is the crown, crown to her husband, and the crown of the visible creation (Note: I do not know what he means here when he says, crown of the visible creation.) The man was dust refined, but the woman was dust double refined, once removed further from the earth. (I take this to mean that Eve, since she was taken out of Adam’s rib, was not made directly from dust as Adam was.) The fact that Adam slept while his wife was being created, reveals that he had cast all his care on God, with a cheerful resignation of himself and all of his affairs to his Maker’s will and wisdom.

In regard to the creation of Eve, Matthew Henry makes this comment, “The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary, Vol. 1 p. 7).

The Ordinance of Marriage

We read, “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral” (Hebrews 13: 4, NIV). Marriage is the plan of God and He is present as a caring father in one’s family life. It is not the brilliant plan of the human mind or the grand scheme of celebrations of the nuptials but the divine sanction and counsel that make one’s marriage delightful. It is quintessential to bear in mind that marriage is to keep and it is meant for life. Therefore, it is honorable and blissful when the bride and the bridegroom come together pure and chaste to preserve the marriage undefiled. The relationship between Christ and the church is compared to the unity of husband and wife. According to the apostle Paul “This is a

IMPORTANT DATES
Indiana Young People's Dec. 27 - 31, 2011
Fort Collins, CO Feb. 24 - 26, 2012
North Carolina Winter Camp Feb. 24 - 26, 2012
North Battleford Feast April 5 - 12, 2012

great mystery” (Eph. 5:32), because it is beyond the intelligence of mankind. God sees husband and wife as one body as it is with Christ and the church.

As we read the following verses, we understand that God unites or joins a man and a woman in holy matrimony and no one has the right to break or separate that relationship.

“‘Haven’t you read’ he replied, ‘that at the beginning, the Creator made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Matthew 19: 4-6, NIV).

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen: 2: 24, NIV). It is unfortunate that among many circles in today’s world, the ordinance of marriage is not considered a divine plan. Without a doubt, marriages are designed, blessed and directed by God for a life time. Holy Scripture does not support divorce but instead emphasizes the strength, unity and integrity of marriage. Celibacy is not necessarily a higher calling than obeying the marriage command itself. The natural instincts of man and the Biblical statements favor the married state. The apostle Paul mentions in his epistle in I Corinthians Ch.7: 9, NIV, “But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” Truthfully, marriage with all its inconveniences is much better than to burn with impure and lustful desires.

“To those who are already married my command or rather, the Lord’s command is that the wife should not be separated from her husband. But if she is separated from him she should either remain unattached or else be reconciled to her husband. A husband must not desert his wife” (I Cor. 7:10-11, J. B. Phillips). Upon marriage, husband and wife are on a journey together on this earthen sod as one entity bound to each other for life. When men and women, in God’s house, in the presence of earthly witnesses, make their solemn marriage vows and promise to stand by one another “for better or worse,” they ought to mean what they say. They make a commitment to one another inviting Christ in their life. Let Christ take His place in the home, and His presence will heal and sanctify the marriage relationship: His grace will enable those who seek and accept it to stand by their vows. “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it” (Ps. 127:1, KJV). It is essential that we allow the Lord Jesus to take control of our marriages and He will then build our house. In the Christian home, Jesus is an ever remembered, though an unseen guest. In Christian marriage there are not two partners, but three - the

third is Christ. “Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4: 12, NIV).

Christ and Church

We are exhorted by the apostle Paul, “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him” (2Cor.11: 2, NIV). The apostle Paul speaks of his apostolic mission of preparing the Corinthian church as a pure virgin unto Christ. Apparently, Paul was concerned for Corinthians that they might be led astray by false teachers who would disconnect them from the one husband who is Christ. We understand here that in the marriage of Jesus Christ and the Corinthian Church, he (Paul) is the friend of the Bridegroom. It is his responsibility to guarantee the chastity of the bride, and he will do all he can to keep the Corinthian Church pure and a fit bride for Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom is preparing His Bride “as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (Eph. 5:27, NIV).

In Song of Solomon’s book, we have a beautiful portrait of Shulamite and her beloved compared to church and Christ. “My beloved spoke, and said unto me: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away! “O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely” (Song of Solomon 2: 10-14, KJV).

The seasons bring about great changes in nature. As the spring makes its way, winter retreats and the rain dies down indicating a clear sign for the arrival of a new season. Spring season transforms the whole landscape around us. During winter, the trees shed their leaves and wait for new life during the spring. The whole of plant life is waiting for a metamorphosis. The birds are hardly seen and are in their hiding place. When the spring breezes blow, suddenly the bare trees and plants experience a new rejuvenation in their entire being. Green leaves begin to appear in trees and plants, flowers begin to blossom in the floral life, and birds begin to chirp proclaiming the joy of the spring season. In the book of Song of Solomon, as we read, the bridegroom is awakening his bride to rise up and come away. Christ the Bridegroom is inviting the church His bride to come away from the wintry experience. It is no longer a time for the bride to sleep in the cleft of the rock or hide in the

stairs but it is time to wake up and respond to the call of the Bridegroom. The Bridegroom wants to hear the voice of praise and the songs of glory from his bride. He has only one bride who is very beautiful and attractive to Him.

Another example we read here pertains to King Solomon's queens, concubines and maidens. "Sixty queens there may be, and eighty concubines, and virgins beyond number: but my dove, my perfect one, is unique, the only daughter of her mother, the favorite of the one who bore her. The maidens saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines praised her. Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession" (Song of Solomon 6: 8-10, NIV)?

The bride of Christ is perfect, undefiled and unique in the eyes of the Bridegroom. Among many, Christ will recognize His people and will seek fellowship and an intimate relationship with them. "All the saints have a place in God's Church; but one company receives the highest prize. The challenge is therefore, thrown out to the saints everywhere, to rid themselves of the corrupting influences of the flesh and of the natural, and to diligently seek the things of the Spirit of God" (cited from the Feast of Tabernacles, George H. Warnock, pp. 60-61).

"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master, and prepared to do any good work" (2 Tim. 2: 20 -21, NIV). The bride has to come out of the rest of the group because of the distinct place that is given to her and become an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master. She is not counted among the concubines or queens but regarded as special, perfect, holy and unique. They are the victorious ones who are able to overcome the world by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (Rev. 12: 11).

"Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: forget your people and your father's house. The king is enthralled by your beauty: honor him, for he is your lord" (Psalms 45: 10-11, NIV). The psalmist implores the bride to forget all her people. The church, which is the ecclesia (called out), has to forget the world and no one should be closer to her than the redeemer Bridegroom. He bought her not with the perishable things such as silver and gold but with his own precious blood, a Lamb without blemish or defect. The bride has to renounce everything that has had an attachment to her former life and become completely identified with the bridegroom so that he will be enthralled in her beauty. "So shall the king

greatly desire thy beauty" (KJV), which intimates that mixing of her old rites and customs, whether Jewish or Gentile, with her religion, would blemish her beauty. The beauty of holiness, both on the church and on particular believers is of great price in the sight of Christ.

We are exhorted, "Therefore come ye out from among them and be separate," says the Lord. "Touch no unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6:17, NIV). The apostle Paul is teaching the believers at Corinth to be separate from the world. True believers come out of the confusion of the world and find rest, peace and joy in His Lordship. The world will offer many subtle choices that are not worthy for the child of God. The bride of Christ has to be fully prepared for the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. She is separated unto the Lord and is waiting with great anticipation for the wedding of the Lamb. "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God" (Rev. 19: 8-9, NIV). The bride of Christ must be uncompromising, unallied, unbending and unyielding to the norms and nuances of the world. She cannot be lured or enticed by the corrupt practices of the society.

Christ the Bridegroom sees the Church as bone of His bones and flesh of His flesh, which expresses deeper spiritual unity and intimacy. The apostle Paul exhorts the Church at Galatia, "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Galatians 4:19, NIV). Apparently, the apostle Paul was quite concerned about the path the church at Galatia had chosen. They had heard the true gospel of Christ from Paul yet they were turning to another gospel that pleased their flesh. It is a clear sign of immaturity and lack of understanding of the Galatian church. It is not enough to be born again, baptized in water, filled with the Holy Spirit, but the bride of Christ must move on to greater depths and heights to the point where she finds that spiritual rest in Him.

The church is also his body and we are the members of His body, His bones and His flesh. He cares, feeds, provides and nourishes to make her complete in Him. As Christ is the head of the church, husband is the head of the wife. Christ loved the church and sacrificed his life in order to receive her as His bride. Husbands should love their wives sincerely and treat them as their own bodies. As Christ the body and Christ the head are inseparable, the relationship between husband and wife is also indivisible. As Christ and church are one, husband and wife become one flesh. He (husband) is as united to her (wife) as the members of the body are united to each other: and would no more think of separating from her than tearing his own body apart.

As the church is the very bone of His bones and flesh of His flesh, the wife is also the bone and flesh of her husband. Indeed it is a profound thought which is incomprehensible to the natural mind, but it is a trans-

ending spiritual knowledge and experience to those who believe in this wonderful unity ordained by God, which first began in the Garden of Eden and now prevails in the body of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual Leadership Is To Be A Servant

By David Gabruch

Spiritual Leadership is a Kingdom principal.

In May 2011 a youth camp, was held in Alberta, Canada. The theme of the camp was Godly leadership. The spirit of God moved powerfully during the camp. In one of the sessions, the young people broke out into five groups. Around a table, with a huge piece of paper on the table, and a marker in hand, they were asked to write a word or phrase of what leadership meant to them. To my surprise, one hundred words/phrases were written down. To the natural mind, how could leadership be described like this?

I must admit, it crossed my mind as to how can anyone possess all of these characteristics? World leaders may have a few of them, but certainly not anywhere close to all of them. So how is it, that so many words describe leadership?

I believe the answer, in part, is dependant on how each person felt or what trial they may be going through, at that time. To one person, who may be experiencing a broken home, someone who demonstrates love and a caring attitude would be a leader to them. Or someone who is feeling discouraged, may see someone with a positive outlook to be a leader to them. To those participating in this session all had different needs and issues and their version of leadership was very much personal.

Out of the list of one hundred descriptors, the most prominent to the young people were – 1) Servant 2) Jesus 3) Lead by example 4) Love 5) Encouraging 6) Willing to stand alone 7) Integrity 8) Determination 9) Humility.

These words, essentially, describes what spiritual leadership is.

Spiritual leadership has certain distinct qualities that we need to understand, which are quite contrary to how the Corporate world views leadership.

In the Corporate world doing things/tasks to get ahead and manage/lead – usually is for self interests – to see how good I am, or could be, and how far can I go? The focus is “self”:

- I'll do it my way
- Focus is on me
- What's in it for me?

- Wanting others to notice “me” in the things I do and say.

The most distinct quality of spiritual leadership is the need to be in submission and surrender – to God's will. It is not about “me”. It is about doing the will of our heavenly Father. We are most fortunate to have an outstanding example: that is our Savior – Jesus Christ.

Jesus displays the ultimate example of spiritual leadership. The scriptures clearly tell us that Christ taught his disciples that spiritual leadership is “servant” leadership. Matt 20:25-28 KJV Jesus speaking: “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (servant), and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (to be a servant), and to give his life a ransom for many.” The words I added, in parenthesis, is to emphasize the word minister means to serve or be a servant.

Though Jesus was the leader of his disciples, yet in John 13:12-17 - He took the role of a servant and washed the disciples' feet. He demonstrated his willingness to be in submission and surrender himself to his Father's will to be a servant to others.

Though Jesus exemplified spiritual leadership, He demonstrated it through a spirit of:

Humility

- An attitude of putting others ahead of Himself
- People are drawn to Christ because they want to – not because they have to
- People want to follow those who serve along side of them
- Gal 5:13 – For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.
- Humility enables you to serve others whole heartedly – setting an example that others can follow

Integrity

- Do what you say – Say what you do.
- Eph 6:6-8 – “Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”
- Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is a slave (bondage) or free”

Honesty

- Being trust worthy
- Prov 16:13 teaches us – Kings take pleasure in honest lips, they value a man who speaks the truth”.

At the last Elders and Deacons meetings, we received teachings on this Kingdom principal. A chart was shown on how leadership is viewed by the “Corporate” and by “God”, which clearly shows the contrast. They are as follows:

Corporate	Spiritual
Self confident	Confident in God
Knows man’s way	Knows God
Makes own decisions	Seeks God’s will
Ambitious	Humble
Creates methods	Follows God’s example
Enjoys command	Delights in obedience to God
Seeks personal reward	Seeks God’s approval
Independent	Dependant on God

Spiritual leadership requires spirit filled people. God will have it no other way. Be wary of influences by worldly wisdom, wealth or social status on what a leader is or should be and then attempt to fit that into the spiritual. God will not allow that to happen in His plan. The prime consideration is being filled with

God’s Holy Spirit.

Being filled with God’s spirit does not mean being passive:

- Rather it means being solid in your commitment to God’s will.
- Endeavor to let your life be lead/guided by the Holy Spirit
- Put into practice the spiritual gift God has given you.
- From that, the fruits of the spirit come forward in your life - which are: love – joy – peace – long suffering – gentleness – goodness – faith – meekness – self controlled - against such there is no law – Gal 5:22-23.

When each of you possess the attitude and desire to be a servant of God and, from your life, the fruits of the spirit are being produced, each of you are spiritual leaders – ready and qualified to serve in God’s Kingdom.

God has given each person, who follows Him and is filled with the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts. These gifts are to be used in fulfilling His purpose on earth, and that is in serving others, like Jesus did while he was on the earth. When these gifts are in operation they are producing the fruits of the Spirit. That is why there are numerous descriptors of what spiritual leadership is. As each of us operates the spiritual gift God has given, you are a spiritual leader in God’s plan and Kingdom. Stand ready and be prepared to move when God nudges you to be His servant to others.

Eph 5:21 – submit yourselves one to the other – out of reverence for Christ – who exemplified spiritual leadership.

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