



## **Solomon's Secrets to Leading Leaders (Proverbs 22:11, 29)**

Have you struggled with influencing your boss? Are you unable to effectively communicate with your spouse? Does the coach of your team seem immovable? In our sinful nature, we have a tendency to respond to conflict with other leaders in three foolish patterns. First, we act with an impure heart, one with mixed motives, mostly selfish at the expense of the interests of God and others. Second, we frequently use hateful speech, words and tone that tear down, rather than build up, our counterparts. Third, we react in an unskilled, or untrained, manner by not investing in the growth of our God-given skills, let alone our wise conflict management muscles. To compound our problem, the challenging people in our lives often operate with these same three liabilities. Consequently, when our wills conflict, we pursue a pathway toward catastrophic encounters that hinder us from leading the strong personalities in our lives. Solomon shared the solution to this dilemma by offering three secrets to leading leaders.

### **(1) Love a Pure Heart (Proverbs 22:11)**

Solomon taught: "One who loves a pure heart and who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend" (Proverbs 22:11) A pure heart has no mixed motives because a pure heart is fully surrendered to God, free from selfish motives, and ready to serve another person's needs. The Bible uses the word "pure" most frequently in reference to precious metal, usually gold. Precious metals must be refined to become pure. This process involves intense heat that brings impurities to the top of the crucible for silver or the furnace for gold, so the refiner can remove them. The deepest impurities rise last after an intense time of heat. Just like the crucible is used for silver and the furnace for gold, so God tests our hearts to discover whether they are pure—wholly devoted, or fully surrendered, to Him: "The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart" (Proverbs 17:3). The Apostle Paul warned us to not be led away from our pure and sincere devotion to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3).

Our ultimate example of a pure heart is the heart of Christ. The Bible tells us that Christ is pure in heart (1 John 3:3; Hebrews 7:26). He demonstrated a fully surrendered heart with unmixed devotion to the Father. Jesus taught: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8). The God of the universe demonstrates His kingdom in the hearts and lives of the pure in heart. They see Christ in themselves. This is illustrated in the molding of silver or

gold. The metal refining process continues until the refiner can see his reflection in the metal, and then the metal is fashioned in its useful state.

As the refiner of the heart, God removes our impurities until He sees the reflection of Christ's pure heart in us (Romans 8:29). When God sees Christ in us, we see God. David noted that our desires would be satisfied when we see Him (Psalm 17:15). He communicated that God would show Himself pure to the pure in heart, but He would judge those with mixed devotions (2 Samuel 22:27; cf. Psalm 18:26). Addressing those with impurities, God promised to reveal Himself to anyone who would seek Him with all of his heart (Jeremiah 29:13).

In order to have a pure heart, we must surrender our impurities, or mixed devotions. Surrender says to God, "I can't satisfy my desires with mixed devotions. You can satisfy my desires when they are fully devoted to you." In order to do this, we need to follow David's example: (1) ask God to search our heart for any mixed devotion (Psalm 139:23-24) and (2) to create in us a pure heart (Psalm 51:10). We accomplish this by praying David's Refining Prayer: "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

#### *Street Smarts for The Restoration Road*

For the next 30 days, pray David's Refining Prayer. Ask God to search your heart for any mixed devotion and to renew in you a pure heart—one that is fully devoted to Him. You will be satisfied through your unmixed devotion to the Creator who will reveal Christ in you.

### **(2) Speak with Grace (Proverbs 22:11)**

Solomon said: "One who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend" (Proverbs 22:11). A pure heart receives God's grace—His underserved love, His unmerited favor, which frames our speech. Our words become loving, full of favor, and focused on the advancement of God's heart in others. Christ, who fully surrendered all to the Father, is the grace of God (2 Corinthians 8:9). It is Christ in us who will lead leaders to Him.

#### *Street Smarts for The Restoration Road*

Surrender your heart and mouth to Christ in the heat of conflict. Follow Paul's teaching: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29).

### **(3) Develop Your Skills (Proverbs 22:29)**

Solomon invited: "Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank" (Proverbs 22:29). How do we become skilled in leading leaders? We work hard, work smart, and give credit to God.

#### *Work hard*

First, we work hard. Solomon observed: "Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth" (Proverbs 10:4). Hard work develops our God-given skills and helps us wisely manage conflict.

#### *Work smart*

Second, we work smart. Solomon continued: "He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son" (Proverbs 10:5). We have often heard this verse summarized in the axiom, "Make hay while the sun shines." Working smart delights other leaders: "A king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant arouses his fury" (Proverbs 14:35).

#### *Give the credit to God*

Solomon shared: "The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD" (Proverbs 21:31). When we work hard and work smart, all credit belongs to God. By humbly accepting this truth, we are much more effective in leading leaders because they are drawn to the Holy Spirit in us.

#### *Street Smarts for The Restoration Road*

Fully surrender the development of your skills to the One who makes a king your friend. Work hard: schedule time in your calendar to go the extra mile in your relationships. Start your day an hour earlier to focus on growing your skills. Read the Bible, pray, seek a mentor in your chosen area of desired growth. This time will increase the intensity of your focus during the day. Work smart: don't perpetuate bad habits, becoming trapped by the tyranny of the urgent. Define and prioritize the most important values in your life. Find a wise confidant to help you with a hard reset of your calendar to include what you value most. Delegate tasks that drain you to someone who would be energized by them. All the while, give credit to God your Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, and Restorer.

### **Conclusion**

Solomon's three secrets to leading leaders teach us when we love a pure heart, speak with grace, and develop our skills, we won't be the ones leading; rather, it will be Christ in us. In order to be effective leaders, we must be good followers. The Apostle Paul summed it up this way: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1).