

The background of the cover is a light blue architectural floor plan. It features various rooms, corridors, and structural elements drawn in white lines. The plan is oriented diagonally, with the main axes running from the top-left to the bottom-right. The lines are thin and precise, typical of a technical drawing.

# **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

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Planning**

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# INTRODUCTION

Many people get confused when you talk about making plans. Some make short range plans that are only good for short range projects. However, when you are planning to build a ministry or company that is to last for a long time, you need to plan accordingly. This booklet will address the difference between making a short-range plan and an effective strategic plan that is long term. You will learn the steps in making a Strategic Plan that will take you to your long-range goals.

The first thing you REALLY need to know is the difference between a simple Plan and a Strategic Plan. A plan is a set of actions that have been thought of as a way to do or achieve something. Planning is the act or process of actually making a plan or steps to achieve or do something. We see that just having a thought about something is not the same as physically making a concrete set of actions that you will take to achieve what you have thought of.

“A plan that is not written down is only a dream.” Many people will say, “I plan to do (something)” but they may not have actually made a plan. They have only had a thought that they may do something if they have time or circumstances permit. Some people say things like, “I plan to buy a home someday” or “I plan to start a business” or “go to church one day.” Just thinking about such things is not the same as actually putting it in writing or taking the steps necessary to begin to do those things.

Strategic planning is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations and ensure that those involved are working toward agreed upon goals. It is a co-operative and disciplined effort that produces decisions and actions that establishes the purpose for an organization. Effective strategic planning defines not only where an organization is going but also the actions needed to get there.

This small booklet should succinctly help you learn how to set goals and priorities that will help you to become more successful in whatever you do.



# Chapter 1

Strategic planning is an essential first step in the development of a resultsbased accountability system. It is defined as the process of addressing the following questions:

## 1. Where am I?

When taking a trip, while it is important to know where you want to go, it is just as important to know where you are when you begin. Otherwise, how will you know which direction to take to get there? Think of it as if you are lost. You have a road map and can point out where you want to go. You can see all the roads leading to your destination but if you don't know your location on the map, you will not be able to get there without lots of trial and error.

When I first moved to Japan, I got lost in the Shinjuku Train Station in Tokyo. It is the largest and busiest underground train station in the world with almost 4 million people passing through daily. It has several levels below ground filled not only with people but also with shops and restaurants that all look similar.

I remember one excursion when I temporarily lost my direction. I knew that I needed to exit from the northwest area of the train station but didn't know which way to go or which corridor to take. It can be stressing if you can't speak enough Japanese to ask directions. Fortunately, most of the signs are both in Japanese and English. If you know the name or number of the exit, it is an easily solvable problem if you know which direction to go.

There are homeless people who sleep in the hallways of this huge underground station at night. When I would take visiting teams of people through that station, I would always tell them to stay close so they would not get separated from the group. I would point to a homeless man sleeping in the corridor and say something like, "That is

a business executive who has gotten lost and couldn't find his way out." That was not really the truth but it reinforced the need to keep close with the team and pay attention to directions so you can get where you want to go. I also use this illustration to reinforce the need to *know where you are at all times, keep focused on where you are going and have a plan for how to get there.* Where do I want to go? (Goal Setting)

Yogi Berra, a famous American baseball player and part time philosopher said, "If you don't know where you're going, you may end up somewhere else." I know that doesn't make sense but that's the great thing about the quote that causes you to remember it. However, it is very true that if you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there? Goal setting is an important part of any kind of planning. You must have more than a vague idea of what you want to do, or where you want to go. You may not have a crystal clear vision of the ultimate goal at first but you should at least have a fairly good idea of what it should look like. It is helpful to have smaller goals along the way that will keep you going in the right direction. You must be like Abraham in the Book of Genesis who was seeking a city whose founder and builder was God. He didn't know where it was located but he had a general idea of which direction to go and knew that he would recognize it when he saw it.

In most things we do, we must have a clear picture in our minds of what we want to accomplish before we begin. When you set your goals, they should be S.M.A.R.T. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based.

**S – Specific.** Your goal should be well defined so you will know when you have achieved it. Remember, "A goal that is not written down is only a dream."

**M – Measurable.** It should be defined in how much, how many, etc., so you will know when you are making progress.

**A – Achievable.** Your goal should not be too difficult to achieve otherwise, it will discourage your team before you begin. Keep in mind that it is easier when you set short term achievable goals. “Inch by inch, life’s a cinch. Yard by yard, life’s hard.” In English, the measurement “inch rhymes with cinch and Yard rhymes with hard making it easy to remember. Think of it as in Centimeters and Meters. It basically means little by little anything is easy to accomplish but if you try to do too much too quickly, it will be very difficult. As you achieve short term goals along the way to the ultimate goal, it will encourage both you and your team.

**R – Realistic.** Your goals should be realistic; neither make them too difficult nor too easy. Keep in mind that you always want to stretch your team to achieve more than the minimum. Know your limitations and don’t attempt too much too soon but keep stretching your team to do more.

**T – Time-based.** Your goals should have a time limit. Keep in mind that, “any job will expand to consume the allotted time.” That means if you set a goal to accomplish a task in a week, it will take the whole week. If you set your goal for four days, it can usually be done in four days. Don’t make your project open ended or say something like, “get it done As Soon As Possible.” Be specific. “A goal that cannot be measured is not a goal.”

### **3. How do I get there?**

Which direction you take will depend on evaluating your options accurately. Do I take a shorter, quick path that is perhaps not secure or do I take a longer and safer route? What will I need along the way? What kind of problems or obstacles might I encounter along the way to my goal? The Boy Scout Motto is, “Be Prepared.” I learned this many years ago and it has served me well in my life’s work. Prepare for as much as you can before you begin and continue to prepare as you progress toward your goal. Many people become discouraged when they suddenly face obstacles they had not prepared for or had not

thought about. Take time to ask yourself, “What could go wrong.” Don’t worry about it but at least give it some thought and make a contingency plan for the most likely problems that could arise. Don’t spend too much time on this but neither should you ignore it.

#### **4. What resources do I have to work with?**

You must evaluate what resources you already have. Then determine what resources and people you will need along the way. Then you can begin to recruit help and gather resources for each stage of development or step you need to take. Don’t be like the man who began to build a house without having enough resources to finish it (Luke 14:28). Count the cost and accurately evaluate what will be needed to reach your goal. There will always be unforeseen problems and needs that will arise but prepare for the most likely ones. If it was easy, everyone would be doing it already.



# Chapter 2

## Direction Setting

Strategic planning is laying out the direction you want your organization to take. The process can be divided into two types of direction setting. One is called Offensive Direction Setting and the other is Defensive Direction setting. There are five steps in each of these processes. Let's look first at the five offensive steps to direction setting.

### Five Offensive steps to Direction Setting

1. **Envision** – Shut the door and take time to do this.

You, as a leader, must take time to get away from distractions that will prevent you from being able to discern what God really wants you to do. You must disconnect yourself from the things in his schedule that will interrupt and distract you from spending quality time alone to envision or day dream about what the future could look like. Allow yourself to be released from the restrictions of money, people and resources to ask God what He wants you to do if you had none of these limitations.

It is reported that Michelangelo, the great Renaissance sculptor, looked at a block of stone and envisioned an angel trapped inside. He said that he would chisel the stone away to release the angel. In a similar way, we need to see the possibilities that lie trapped within our circumstances and release them so that God's plan and vision for our ministry can be fulfilled.

You must take the time to envision the “angel” trapped in the block of stone of stone and see the possibilities that are just waiting to be released from within the walls of your ministry. If you can see the angel or possibilities, you can determine what must be done so that it can be released and functioning the way God has shown you.

The temptation will be to feel guilty for taking the time off from your regular duties to seemingly do nothing but day dream of what the future might someday become. It is important to dream and think beyond what you can currently see. Allow God to show you His plan for the future and break off the small thinking of the past and listen to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit within telling you of God’s plan for your future. Let me caution you to be careful about telling people too early about what God is showing you for the distant future. Remember Joseph. His family did not understand, nor did he, for that matter, what lay in store for his future. He only knew that God had put something deep within his heart and that it was beyond his personal ability to understand or make it come to pass. In that same way, God may give you a glimpse of something in your future. Don’t try to move too fast but rather hide it in your heart, like Mary, the mother of Jesus, while working a step at a time in that direction.

I met a man years ago who had a prison ministry in America in the state of Florida. When he was a young man in Bible School some years before, a prophet had come to his school and picked him out of the audience and said, “Young man, you will have a prison ministry in the state of Florida preaching and teaching many about the ways of God.” The young man, against the advice of the school leadership left school and moved from the central part of America to the southern state of Florida. When I met him, he was middle aged and being used mightily by God to reach prison inmates in Florida, teaching and training them in the ways of God. It was a glorious fulfillment of God’s prophetic word from many years before. The problem was that he was also a prisoner. He has left Bible School ahead of God’s timing and moved to Florida. He eventually could not get a good job and slowly, disappointed in

God, he backslid and lost his family. He was a very smart man. At lunch time one day, some of his coworkers began to ask him about how he might rob the bank across the street from where they all worked. It was an interesting distraction from his daily routine at work. He spent a week or more talking and planning how he would rob that bank. He had no intention of robbing the bank but was just talking about the possibility. The business they worked for had problems and was forced to close with all the men losing their jobs. The co-workers, without telling my friend had decided to rob the bank using his plan. However, at the last minute, the driver of the getaway car backed out. They called my friend and told him about their plan. They told him that he was only needed to drive the car, not rob the bank. Having lost his family and having no job, he reluctantly agreed. They robbed the bank and got away. However, one of the other two men was so nervous and afraid that he couldn't sleep. He went to the police to turn himself in to get a lighter prison sentence. The two robbers told the judge that it was my friend's plan that they had used to rob the bank. My friend was sentenced to 20 years in prison while the other two got a lighter sentence. My friend, Elvin Gill, had been in prison for many years, had repented and turned back to God and had a flourishing prison ministry from within the prison. He was one of the best preachers I have ever heard. God's word for him had been fulfilled. I'm not sure that was what God had in mind in the beginning but His word will come to pass. Although the promise of God for you may be delayed, wait for it and it will surely come to pass. How long will you need to wait? Only God knows for sure but encourage yourself by considering those in the Bible who had to wait. Read Hebrews chapter 11 and consider Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David and many others who didn't give up just because the answer did not come right away.

We must envision what God tells us He wants for our future but be flexible in the way it actually comes to pass. Often in the New Testament we will read the phrase, "This is that which was spoken of by the prophets." Sometimes, we would not have known that it was the fulfillment of a certain prophecy unless we were told. For instance, on

the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Peter told everyone that “This is that which was spoken of by the Prophet Joel . . . .” If he had not told us, it would have been difficult to imagine that it was the same thing. Joel talks about the outpouring of the Spirit of God on all flesh with prophesying and dreaming dreams but never mentioned flames of fire resting over each person nor did he mention speaking in other tongues. When God speaks to us, we must be careful not to limit what He wants to do or how He wants to do it. If we limit God in our lives, we may miss the complete fulfillment of His plan for our lives.

You must set aside time to get quiet to hear from God about what He wants. Don't feel guilty for taking time off to envision. Jesus took time away from His disciples to spend with His Father. His mission was to make disciples who would later impact the entire world through their disciples. Jesus knew that He must spend time with the Father to get instructions and to formulate specific plans for what was next. Keep in mind that although Jesus was completely God, He was also completely human. He hung up His divinity like hanging a coat in the closet and put on humanity. Everything Jesus did on earth was done as a human in a human body to show that it was possible for a human to do the same things if he was connected to the Father and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “the works I do shall you do also, and even greater works shall you do because I go to the Father.” (John 14:12). Jesus never performed a miracle until He was baptized with the Holy Spirit. When Jesus ascended, He told the 500 who were there to go to Jerusalem and wait until they were endued with power from on high. That power came when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them on the Day of Pentecost. They already had the Holy Spirit because Jesus had breathed on them in John 20:22 and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” The promise that the Holy Spirit would not only be “with” them but also “in” them came on the Day of Pentecost and the church was commissioned to then go into all the world. (John 14:17). The church received the power needed to go and do all that Jesus had commanded. This promise was for those early believers and for all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord shall call. (Acts 2:39). You

must be empowered by the Holy Spirit and take time alone with Him to receive His instructions for what's next. You will receive instructions and wisdom that can take you to the next level of development in your ministry. It begins with you taking time to envision your future and see what God sees in you.

## **2. Communicate.**

You then must learn how to communicate with your people and tell them what God wants in such a way that they are inspired to follow you. Tell them what you believe God wants to happen. You must be focused and specific. Think of it like aiming a rifle and not a shotgun. You must be specific and not general in setting and communicating your goal. Five questions should be asked in this order: Who? What? Why? How? When? Give enough clarity and detail that there will be no doubts remaining. No further involvement should be needed on your part because you communicated clearly what you want. Don't allow people to keep coming back for you to repeat the instructions. Do it right and give clear directions the first time. The end results will be proportional to the clarity of direction you give to your team.

## **3. Prioritize.**

What context does this fit into? You must let people know what is important in relation to you, to the ministry, to the congregation and to others who will also have to do some work on the project. Don't give twelve "number one" priorities! Make it clear what is most important and what is not as important. Too often people get confused as to what is important and what it not. Valuable time can be wasted by doing things out of sequence. It is your job as the leader to make sure your people know what is and what is not important by establishing priorities and clearly communicating those priorities to your people.

## **4. Establish Parameters.**

Ground rules should be established for conduct, responsibilities, resources, authority, etc. Everyone should know the chain of command. Each leader should know the extent of his authority and how much money he can spend without getting permission from higher up. Don't micro manage your people but rather give them authority according to what the job requires. You can increase that authority as the need arises but it should be made clear at the beginning what they can and cannot do without permission from higher up.

I know of a pastor who started a ministry that became very large. The man who was his administrator had been a part of the ministry from the very beginning. They were the best of friends. However, there was a rule that no one could spend more than a certain amount of money without permission from the senior pastor. An opportunity arose to pave their parking lot. The parking lot needed paving and it would save the church lots of money but a decision had to be made that same day. Unfortunately, the senior pastor was traveling and could not be reached. The administrator took it upon himself to authorize the spending of money beyond his authority. Everyone on the staff of this church knew of the rule that no one could spend that much money without the permission of the senior pastor. When the senior pastor returned and found out about it, it created a real dilemma for him. The decision was a good decision and had saved the church lots of money. However, the rule remained that no one was authorized to spend that much money without his permission. If the senior pastor did not sack his administrator friend, other staff members would know that the rules only applied to certain people and not his close friend. He would lose respect in the eyes of his staff for breaking his own rule. The administrator told the pastor that he knew that he should not have spent the money and should be sacked. The pastor dismissed the administrator and hired someone else to do that work. The staff's respect for the pastor went up because he was a man of his word whether it was his long-time friend or one of them. The rules would be followed regardless of who broke them. The church continued to grow. The administrator got another job with a ministry where he could use

his talents in greater ways than at the church. Everyone ended up happy with this difficult decision. It showed that you cannot make a rule and not also enforce it evenly, consistently and with everyone, regardless of your personal feelings. You must establish parameters but be careful because they could have unexpected consequences.

## 5. Anticipate

You must ask yourself this question, “What could go wrong?” Benjamin Franklin, a great American Statesman instrumental in the founding of America once said, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” You could say 100 grams of prevention is worth a kilo of cure. It means that a little preparation is worth more than knowing how to solve a large problem. As a leader, you must always be asking yourself, “What could go wrong?” and form contingency plans. This does not mean that you should worry about everything that could go wrong but take precautionary measures, at least in your mind, to ensure that if something bad or unexpected does happen that it will not be such a big surprise as to have catastrophic results. As a leader, you must always be looking for those little things that if left unresolved, could create major problems. I Corinthians 5:6 says that a little leaven or yeast will cause the whole lump of dough to rise. A little sin or unresolved problem can spoil the entire project. You must look for the small things that can have long term negative effects.

There was a poem written around the 14<sup>th</sup> century about the loss of a nail that secured a horseshoe on a horse. It says,

*For want (or lack) of a nail a shoe was lost.*

*For want of a shoe a horse was lost.*

*For want of a horse a rider was lost.*

*For want of a rider a message was lost.*

*For want of a message a battle was lost.  
For want of a battle a kingdom was lost.  
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.*

We must anticipate and ask, “What could go wrong?” and take necessary precautions to ensure that our project or program will continue regardless of problems that may arise. A leader should be looking far ahead and anticipate the wiles of the enemy who seeks to steal, kill and destroy. Ask the Holy Spirit to tell you what you need to know so that your project can be accomplished successfully and on time. After all, this is the Lord’s work and He wants it done correctly and on time more than you want it. Anticipate what problems your people may encounter personally that could hinder them from accomplishing their work and thus delay or derail the whole project. Anticipating is not lack of faith but being wise. Proverbs says that a wise man looks ahead, sees problems coming and prepares himself. That means you should anticipate potential problems and make contingency plans in case they should arise. A wise man does not need to stop and pray for hours about what to do when a problem suddenly arises. He has already considered such a problem and has a contingency plan for dealing with it.

I once worked for a man who had been an economist and college professor. Later, after years in ministry, he became a member of parliament. When I met him, he was the chief administrator for the Olympic Games Outreach in Los Angeles, California in 1984. I was the director for the Orange County region and he was my boss. The next year, I was recruited to go to Japan to become his assistant to organize a five year evangelistic campaign there called, “Love Tokyo.” He would ask me to investigate certain potential opportunities for ministry or for equipment and resources we needed to do the ministry. I would present him with various options and he would make quick decisions and they were always good decisions. I once asked him how he made such important decisions so quickly and they always turned out to be good decisions. He told me that there was nothing quick

about his decisions. He had prayed a long time about each decision that would need to be made and considered what was needed for each project. When he heard the options, it was easy to see which of the options was the best based on the need and what was available. He said that as he prayed beforehand that questions and potential problems would arise in his mind. He prayed into each one. He would look at the solutions, cost and what would be best for the ministry. Later, when he heard from me about the options available to him, he could clearly see which option was best. I learned that with every option, there will be potential problems and issues that could arise. If I considered them and looked for a good solution ahead of time, it would be much easier to make a quick, quality decision when the time came.

## Chapter 3

### **Five Defensive Steps to Direction Setting**

#### **1. Understanding**

The best way to understand something is to ask questions about it. If there is anything that you are unclear about, you should ask questions about it until you are clear in your understanding of what is required from you. Too many young leaders will assume that they understand something only later to discover that they did not.

I took a Business Law course in College many years ago. The teacher who was a practicing attorney walked into the class, wrote his name on the chalk board and called the roll. The next thing he did was to write the word ASSUME on the board. He then broke it down by drawing a line between certain letters of the word until it looked like this: ASS / U / ME. This may not make sense to you if you are reading this booklet in some language other than English but this is the meaning. He said NEVER Assume anything. If you do, it will make an ASS out

of both YOU and ME. He said this is the most important thing to know in doing business. Never ASSUME anything. Get the facts.

Over the years, I learned how to deal with people and their understanding of what I had asked them to do. First of all, don't assume that someone understood the instructions you just gave them. Ask them to repeat their understanding of what you just asked them to do. It is the same for business or ministry. If we assume things that we don't know for sure, we may end up with lots of problems. Find out. Ask questions. Get answers and commitments. This is one lesson that has been invaluable to me over the years.

Don't tell those who work for you things like, "Let's get this program rolling, ASAP (As Soon As Possible). Let's get this thing going. Let's get this show on the road." or some other thing that doesn't really have a specific meaning. I understand that these are Americanisms that may not have the same meaning in the language in which you may be reading this. However, those phrases mean that you want to motivate your people to do something right away to implement the project or program without delay. However, you need to be VERY specific about what you want them to do and when you want it done. This will generate questions that will eliminate excuses and will keep them from coming back to ask you questions about what you really meant.

You must analyze just how committed they are to you and to seeing the assignment completed. How they react or their questions or lack of questions about the assignment will tell you if they really understand what you want them to do. Ask questions like, "Are you comfortable with this?" or "What are your concerns?"

## **2. Get Confirmation**

When you, as a leader, give an assignment to someone, don't just ask, "Do you understand what I have asked you to do." Get them to TELL you what their understanding is about what you have asked them to do.

Get them to repeat it back to you until they can do it without leaving out a single detail.

They should be taking notes, if not, don't waste your time. Tell them to "Relate back to me in detail what I have directed you to do." They must cover every area of the job you are asking them to do. Ask them, "What are you least clear about?" Listen carefully to see if they have left anything out. Don't allow people to keep coming back to you asking questions about things they should have asked when you gave them the assignment. Your time is too valuable to be wasted by people returning to ask details that they should have asked at the beginning. You are training your people by the way you assign work for them to do. When you assign a job for them to do, it should stimulate questions about things they should be thinking about. Remember, your job is to train your people to do the job so you won't have to be directly involved. Work with them and teach them to ask all the questions and get all the answers they can at the very beginning. They should then go back and begin to solve the logistical and personnel issues they will face in successfully completing their project. Remember, your job is to train them to do the work, not do it yourself.

### **3. Commitment**

Ask questions that will eliminate excuses. "What are you least comfortable with?" Get them to talk about their uncertainty with things like, who will help them, budget issues, timing and being stretched to do things beyond their current skill set. Ask them things like, "Can you do this like we discussed? Can you complete this on time? Can you foresee any problems? What are you most concerned about?"

Your goal in asking these questions is to help them to THINK deeply about what you have asked them to do. "Thinking is hard work, that's why so few people do it." Your job as a leader who is training other leaders, is to stimulate thinking about the project, potential problems and solutions so that the job can be completed on time. If you settle the

issues listed above in advance, you will save time and help your young leader to gain confidence in their ability to hear from God and accomplish the job He (and you) have assigned him to do. Jesus tells us in John 10:10 that His sheep hear His voice. In John 14:26, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things and bring back to our memory the things He has already taught us. God wants you to succeed with whatever He gives you to accomplish for Him and He has empowered you with His very own Spirit to hear His voice and be directed by Him. How can we not succeed if we listen for His direction and follow His leading?

When you assign a job, play back all their former excuses. By that, I mean ask them questions about the problems that have hindered them in the past from accomplishing what they agreed to do. It could be things like, “Does your neighbor’s dog still bark at night and keep you from sleeping? Or Does your Mother-in-law still living with you? Or does your new baby sleep through the night yet?” Try to discourage them in order to make sure they really want to do the job. Ask things like, “Are you sure you can do this, remember the last time when ....” Give them the option to be able to say, “No” now, not later. You want what is best for your sheep, not just yourself. You want to develop an honest and open relationship with your people. Help them to feel free to say that they can’t do it right now because of other things going on in their life. It is different when a person is a full time staff member. Volunteers may have things going on in their lives that you don’t know about so make sure when you ask them to do something that they have what I call “a safe harbor” to say no. A Safe Harbor is where a ship can anchor away from the storms going on out on the seas. We need to create a safe place for our people to be completely honest with their leaders. Remember, you are setting the example for your future leaders. How you train them is what they will become.

Let me add an important note here concerning volunteers. Generally, you do not treat volunteers any differently from your full time staff when it comes to commitment to do a job. They should be doing it

because the Lord has directed them to do it, not just because you asked them to do it. Their commitment is to God first and foremost, then to you. They may be tempted to slack off if it is something you asked them to do for you but would not slack off if they knew they were doing it for the Lord Himself. All that we do should be done first and foremost for the Lord. We do not answer just to the Pastor but to God, Himself. When we make a commitment to do something, it should be to Him and not to a mere man. You, as a leader, must hold people accountable to the Lord, not just to yourself. This may seem strict but everything we do should be because God has directed us to do it. Our commitment should be to Him. We will also answer to Him and give account of what we did with what He gave to us, whether it be skills and abilities or material things.

When a person has committed to do a job and you have discussed it in detail and the possible hindrances they may face, you should get the following commitment from them.

You should say the following: ***“It is now your responsibility that if anything should occur that would in any way hinder you from accomplishing this job, the way I have delegated it, the way you have agreed to do it, in the time frame in which you agreed to do it, it is your responsibility to contact me immediately and let me know what YOU intend to do to so this job can be completed on time.”***

When they come to you, don't take the job back. It is no longer your job, it's theirs. You gave it to them so it is no longer yours. Don't let them make excuses. It is still their job. When they tell you about a problem, ask them, “What are you going to do about it? Or What do you think you should do about it.” Often, a young leader is only looking for confirmation about what to do. Listen to what they plan to do and either confirm by saying, “That sounds like you have a good idea. Why don't you do that?” Let them know that it is their idea, not yours. You are only agreeing with them.

If they say, “I don’t know what to do about the problem” you should ask questions that will stimulate thought. “What do you think you should do?” You can ask them things like, “Why don’t you think about doing \_\_\_\_\_.” or “Why don’t you ask (a certain expert)?” or some other question that will stimulate their thinking about possibilities. You probably could easily solve the problem for them but your job is to train them to think and solve the problem for themselves. This will build confidence in them that they really can do the job assigned to them and it will keep you from receiving calls that will interrupt your other work. Too often, insecure leaders like to be the person to solve every problem. It makes them feel good. However, it is about leadership, not doership.

I overheard two of my staff people talking one day. One was talking about a problem he was having with his ministry. The other said, “Why don’t you go ask Jim.” He answered and said, “That’s a waste of time, all he will do is ask me what I think I should do to solve the problem so I may as well go ahead and solve it myself.” I was so encouraged that my staff member had passed the test and was working on solving the problem himself, thus giving him confidence to attempt bigger things in the future. Ephesians 4:11-12 tells us that the purpose of the five-fold ministry is to train the saints to do the work of the ministry. It is not for the Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to do it all but rather to train the saints to do the work of the ministry.

Don’t let them make excuses. It is their problem, not yours and the ball is still in their court. Their job is to solve the problem and make the project a success. Your job is to HELP them, not DO it for them. Think of it in the same way you teach a child to tie his shoes. At first, you tie them for him while showing him. He may come back and need more instructions at first but after a few times he is tying them for himself. He may need to re-tie them more often than when you do it for him but he is slowly learning how to do it himself. After a short time of “training” you will never have to do it for him

again. In that same way, if we work with our leaders and train them, that is, working with them and showing them how, we will never have to do it for them again. They will have become skillful and will train those under them to that same skill level. You have trained them by example so they can train others. This principle can be found in 2 Corinthians 1:4 – referring to God, “who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the same comfort we ourselves receive from God.” Training time is never wasted on a person with a teachable spirit.

Let me interject that there is a great difference between teaching and training. Teaching usually involves a transfer of knowledge whereas training involves working with someone or a group so that there is a skill transfer. Let’s suppose that you go to a pet store and buy a puppy. The store clerk assures you that he is a smart dog and will soon learn how to do all kinds of things. The store clerk even gives you a small booklet about how to train your dog. You get home and begin with the first simple lesson, “How to get your dog to roll over.” You set your dog down and slowly read the lesson from the book instructing him how to roll over. Your dog has been listening to every word and wagging his tail with anticipation of what’s next. You then place the book aside and clear your throat and give the command, “Roll over!” The dog just looks at you with that same sense of anticipation and eagerly wagging his tail but he does not roll over. You give the command again but nothing different happens. You decide to read the lesson to him again but more slowly this time. Still no response from the dog. You decide, “Either this dog is stupid or then book is no good.” You would never do something like that because you know that you must work with a young dog to demonstrate what action to take at the sound of “Roll over.”

The problem is that in the church, pastors teach, teach and teach, but without giving instructions on the practical application of what they are teaching. No wonder they have to do all the work. They have not trained and worked with people to “train” them how to do what they

teach about on Sundays. We must take the time to “work along-side” our people if we want them to learn to accomplish the tasks we assign them. Jesus walked with his disciples every day and trained them in word and deed, only then did He send them out on their own.

#### **4. Pre-Implementation Evaluation**

This takes place before the project is launched. Remember, your primary job is to help your people succeed. If they succeed, then you have succeeded. You should meet with your people during the planning or depending on their skill set, toward the end of the planning time to make sure they have not forgotten anything. The newer the leader, the more time you will need to spend with them training them to do things the way you want it done. You will need to approve their plan before it is launched, giving any input you deem necessary for success.

Ask questions that will lead them to find answers to problems that they have not yet considered. Your job is to stimulate their thinking so they will learn how to plan and look for obstacles. Don't spend too much time on potential problems that have little to no possibility of happening. Concentrate on the real issues that the project is likely to face. It is good to be optimistic but keep in mind that Murphy, of Murphy's Law, was an optimist. His law says, “Everything is more difficult than it appears. Everything will take longer than you expect and if anything can go wrong it will and at the worst possible time. Mr. Murphy was a pessimist but sometimes it seems that his law which was formulated in the 1950's was really optimistic. It often seems that multiple problems arise at the same time making each of the individual problems seem larger than they really are.

We should consider possible issues and problems we may face but let me encourage you not to spend too much time trying to find solutions to problems that don't already exist. You only have a certain amount of time and you need to use it primarily on the issues that are important for successfully completing your project. How you spend your time is

important. Time is one of those things that you cannot get back. Once it is gone, it is gone forever. Use it wisely.

Deal with the major issues you will face in completing the project and then look at the possible hindrances after you have already formed your strategy or plan. You can always make an adjustment if needed. Major on the major areas of your project and spend only a small amount of time on the areas of lesser importance. After you have built a solid foundation for your project, you can then address the minor issues. It is not that the minor issues are not important but don't allow them to overshadow the most important parts of your project.

If the project leader has a teachable spirit, your "suggestions" will be received and implemented. However, keep in mind that the leader may develop with new and innovative ways of accomplishing the project better than the old ways you have been doing it. The senior leader must be open to allowing for new and innovative ways of getting the job done. You are to provide success through your wisdom, providing resources and encouragement but don't allow yourself to be so stuck in the old ways of doing things that you cannot see better ways of accomplishing something. Remember the seven last words of a dying church or organization are, "We – never – did – it – that – way – before." Be open to better and more efficient ways to do the same old kinds of work.

## **5. Post-Implementation Evaluation**

After a project has been launched you should keep monitoring its progress. Don't ignore it. You should meet with your project leader and his team about half way through the project to make sure they are on schedule and that nothing has arisen that could stop the project from being successfully completed. You may want to make suggestions or corrections to their plan. Remember, it is their plan and you are there to guide and help them succeed.

Depending on the skill level of the leader, you should check periodically throughout the project and at the 90% completion point. This will allow you time to fix it or make changes if there is a last minute problem. Inexperienced people will need more evaluation than an experienced leader. You can tell some leaders what you want done and just have them report back to you when it is finished. We all need leaders working with us that we can say, "Make it happen" and forget it until they tell you it is done. Tell your younger leaders that you will work with them. Encourage them and teach them. Remember, your job is to help them succeed.

You are training them by the way you work with them and evaluate the project after it is launched. Get the FACTS. Is it working? Set achievable goals or what I call mile (kilometer) markers along the way to make sure they are on track and that they are making sufficient and timely progress.

You, as the leader, should set a standard of performance where correction means that you love them. "Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly the first time." However, you want them to improve. You are working toward training them to execute your programs to the point of perfection. If you aim low, you probably won't be disappointed. God wants us to keep striving for excellence. We want to do our very best for the Lord so we should do our work as unto the Lord wanting to please him.

Too many Christians are sloppy in their attitude and work. Some believe that anything will do regardless of whether it is sloppy or perfect. I find that a lazy attitude in doing the Lord's work has produced sloppy and slothful Christians. Leaders reproduce leaders after their own kind. If the leaders will lead, the people will follow. Sometimes, Jesus was very strict with His disciples. It did not mean that he was angry with them but it is a way of making sure that people understand the importance of something. We must set the standard for excellence that the Lord requires of us. "Be ye holy, even as I am

Holy.” (I Peter 1:16). The Apostle Paul told his followers to “be imitators of me even as I imitate Christ.” (I Cor. 11:1). We are to be set apart and do whatever we do as unto the Lord. We are doing our work, not just for our leader but for the Lord God, Himself. We must do His work His way. We will stand before Him one day to give answer for why we did what we did. Will we be like the servant who buried his talent in the earth or like those who used it with excellence according to their ability. Leaders are required to train their people to God’s standard of excellence and holiness, not man’s standards.

We must train our people to develop core competencies so we can do the Lord’s work with excellence. Core competencies are the basic things that must be mastered in order to produce a successful work. We must train our people to execute their jobs to the point of perfection. “Repetition is the motor of learning.” We learn and become skilled as we gain experience through repetition. If we want to please God, we will want to do his work His way. We are His representative on earth. He is not lazy nor does He do sloppy work. We must strive to please Him in all that we do.

Ministries are built through wisdom and established through knowledge. Train your people to evaluate the success of their work or project so they can keep on improving. They must learn to evaluate so they can set the standard for their own people. “People don’t do what you expect, they do what you inspect.” That means that if people don’t think you will be inspecting their work, they may become lazy and slothful. One day we will all stand before the Lord to have our works judged.

What will you say to the Lord when He asks about what you did with the things He has given you to use for His Kingdom? Will He commend you as a good and faithful servant or will He cast you into outer darkness as an unfaithful servant? Whatever we do for the Lord, we should do it with all our heart.

## **Conclusion:**

As a leader, you are responsible for guiding your ministry and people so that your part of the Lord's work throughout the world will be accomplished and the Great Commission fulfilled. You must hear from the Lord and develop a Strategic Plan that will accomplish His plan for your life and ministry. Each of us have been given certain abilities and gifts so that we can do our part to accomplish God's purpose in the earth. God will send you all the help you need.

Some may need more training and preparation than others. You were created for a particular job and as a leader you have the responsibility to guide others to work with you so that their calling will also be fulfilled. You must learn to use your gift to plan well and guide others to do the same so that together you both can fulfill your destiny.

Remember, "If a leader will lead, the people will follow."



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