

FOLLOWERSHIP: EIGHT KEYS TO BECOMING A GREAT FOLLOWER

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow Christ

Assess: When and where did you decide to follow Christ?

Insights and Ideas

Good leaders first learned how to follow before receiving the reigns of leadership. Understanding followership early on will help you exercise better leadership later on. But followership isn't seasonal.

Even if your leadership title expands, you will always find yourself in the role of a follower. You might report to another leader, a board of directors, or a group of overseers. Whatever the case, leadership is never fully separated from followership. That's especially true as a follower of Christ.

If you're a leader in charge, it's essential to remind yourself daily that you are first and foremost a follower of Christ. Your identity is in Him. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). This verse gives us three insights into what it means to follow Christ:

1. **Surrender.** Jesus began by saying that His disciples must "deny themselves." As a follower of Jesus, we have a calling to live in continual surrender to His lordship. That means denying our selfish interests. Author and pastor Gerald Brooks often says, "When you become a leader, you lose the right to think about yourself." Our primary focus is one of continual surrender to Jesus and His perfect will.
2. **Sacrifice.** You will make sacrifices in leadership, but God also calls you to sacrifice in followership. Jesus said His disciples must "take up their cross daily." While we wear the cross as a beautiful piece of jewelry, the truth is, it's a symbol of humiliation, suffering and death. It represents the sacrifice Jesus made for all of us, and it's a reminder of the sacrifice He calls us to make as His followers. How often? Jesus said "daily."
3. **Submission.** Jesus concludes by saying, "Follow me." Followers always submit to a leader. As followers of Christ, we recognize and readily admit that our allegiance is to Jesus, and He is the One we follow. We must be willing to submit all of our plans, strategies, hopes and dreams to Christ, the Head of the Church.

The longer we lead, the more tempted we are to expect the perks and privileges of power. That's one reason why maintaining the posture of followership is so critical. It keeps us grounded. If we ever forget that we are followers *before* we are leaders, we will be more prone to poor leadership. Simply put, how we follow Christ affects how we lead others.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What does surrender, sacrifice and submission to Christ look like for a follower of Jesus?
2. How does following Christ keep you grounded in your leadership?
3. What would it look like to make following Christ more of a central part of your leadership?

Apply

It's important for leaders to stay centered. One way this happens is by continually reminding ourselves of whom we are following, and that our leadership is ultimately in submission to God. Spend a few minutes in prayer, recommitting yourself to Christ, and choosing a life of surrender, sacrifice and submission to Him.

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow Christ

Assess: When and where did you decide to follow Christ?

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“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23).

This verse gives three insights on following Christ:

1. _____. “When you become a leader, you lose the right to think about yourself.” – Gerald Brooks

2. _____. The Cross is a symbol of humiliation, suffering and death. It represents the sacrifice Jesus made for all of us, and it's a reminder of the sacrifice He calls us to make as His followers. How often? Jesus said “daily.”

3. _____. As followers of Christ, we recognize and readily admit that our allegiance is to Jesus, and He is the One we follow. We must be willing to submit all of our plans, strategies, hopes and dreams to Christ, the Head of the Church.

If we ever forget we are followers *before* we are leaders, we will be more prone to poor leadership. Simply put, how we follow Christ affects how we lead others.

Apply

It's important for leaders to stay centered. One way this happens is by continually reminding ourselves of whom we are following, and that our leadership is ultimately in submission to God. Spend a few minutes in prayer, recommitting yourself to Christ, and choosing a life of surrender, sacrifice and submission to Him.

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow Your Leader

Team Review: How have you felt challenged to make following Christ more central in your leadership?

Assess: What are the marks of a good follower?

Insights and Ideas

If you are working for a company, a school, a nonprofit, a church or any other organization, you likely report to somebody. Your boss is your leader, and part of your assignment is to help your leader, and the mission of your organization, excel. That's your No. 1 goal as a follower.

Where we get into trouble is when we confuse the roles — when we seek the position of leadership rather than being comfortable with the posture of followership. If you do a good job following, God tends to take care of the promoting. So, how should you follow your leader? Here are three steps:

1. *Be secure as a follower.* The landscape of leadership is riddled with insecure leaders. Unfortunately, the fallout is often ugly. Part of following your leader is being OK with your role as a follower. Secure followership is always better than insecure leadership. If you can be secure in your role as a follower, you are more likely to exhibit security when God promotes you in leadership.
2. *Be committed to your leader.* God has assigned you to follow the leader who is in your life right now. He hasn't called you to follow a famous preacher, the author of a best-seller, or the leader of a worldwide movement. God has called you to serve *your* leader, not somebody else's. Be OK with that. Don't expect your pastor or leader to be an inauthentic version of somebody else. Let your leader be the person God created him or her to be, and then commit to that leader's success.
3. *Be faithful as a follower.* If your boss is the leader, that makes you the follower. Each is a unique role. The Parable of the Bags of Gold reveals the job of both the follower and the leader. The master in Matthew 25:21 said, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" According to this passage, the follower's job is to be *faithful*, and the leader's job is to be a *promoter*. When the first two servants doubled their master's money, they exhibited faithfulness. When the master put the servants in charge of more opportunity, he acted as a promoter. Promotion without faithfulness leads to entitlement. Faithfulness without promotion leads to discouragement.

When you follow your leader as a secure, committed and faithful follower, you add value to your leader and prove to God you are trustworthy. Those are the followers God promotes.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What does it look like to be a follower and a leader simultaneously?
2. Why is security (as a follower and as a leader) so important?
3. How can you become more faithful as a follower, or a better promoter as a leader?

Apply

Take a few minutes to think about the leader God has called you to serve. What are three ways you can become more secure as a follower, more committed to *your* leader, and more faithful as a follower? What will you do this week to apply those three ideas?

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow Your Leader

Assess: What are the marks of a good follower?

We get into trouble when we confuse the roles — when we seek the position of leadership rather than being comfortable with the posture of followership.

How to follow your leader:

1. *Be _____ as a follower.* Part of following your leader is being OK with your role as a follower. If you can be secure in your role as a follower, you are more likely to exhibit security when God promotes you in leadership.
2. *Be _____ to your leader.* God has assigned you to follow the leader who is in your life right now. Don't expect your pastor or leader to be an inauthentic version of somebody else.
3. *Be _____ as a follower.* "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21).

The follower's job is to be *faithful*, and the leader's job is to be a *promoter*. When the first two servants doubled their master's money, they exhibited faithfulness. When the master put the servants in charge of more opportunity, he acted as a promoter. Promotion without faithfulness leads to entitlement. Faithfulness without promotion leads to discouragement.

Apply

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Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow the Vision

Team Review: What steps have you taken to better follow your leader?

Assess: What is the vision of your church or organization?

Insights and Ideas

There is a consistent pattern throughout Scripture where God entrusts vision to the leader of His people. God gave Moses a vision to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. “So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:10).

God gave Joshua a vision to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them — to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses” (Joshua 1:2–3).

And God gave Nehemiah a vision to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. “They said to me, ‘Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.’ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 1:3–4).

In each case, God birthed the vision, and the people’s responsibility was to follow.

The same is true for us today. When God gives a pastor or leader a vision, our job is to follow it, not hijack it. Vision hijackers create dissension, division and disunity. If you can’t agree with the vision, then you’ve become sideways energy to the vision. The best strategy is to follow the vision enthusiastically. How?

1. *Follow the vision personally.* The first way to personalize the vision is by choosing not to create your own vision. It’s a commitment to maintain unity, and a singular focus on the vision of the house. When you put the vision before your own preferences, ideas and ambitions, you demonstrate loyal commitment.
2. *Follow the vision practically.* Once you personalize the vision, your next step is to live it practically in your day-to-day life. Following the vision in practical and applicable ways moves the vision from a corporate statement to a personal stance. It elevates your commitment.
3. *Follow the vision publicly.* You follow the vision publicly when you enthusiastically share it with others. This is where you inspire teams with the vision, and champion the vision so others can run with it.

The prophet Habakkuk records the words of the Lord: “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it” (Habakkuk 2:2). Following the vision personally, practically and publicly is the best way to run with the vision.

Reflect and Discuss

1. How have you seen split visions create division within a church?
2. What are some personal and practical ways to embrace and live your church’s vision?
3. What have you found to be the best way to communicate a vision publicly and rally people to pursue it?

Apply

Write down a simple plan for personally, practically and publicly following the vision of your church. Then put at least one of those steps into action this week

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow the Vision

Assess: What is the vision of your church or organization?

“So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:10).

“Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them — to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses” (Joshua 1:2–3).

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How to follow the vision enthusiastically:

1. *Follow the vision* _____. The first way to personalize the vision is by choosing not to create your own vision. It’s a commitment to maintain unity, and a singular focus on the vision of the house.
2. *Follow the vision* _____. Following the vision in practical and applicable ways moves the vision from a corporate statement to a personal stance.
3. *Follow the vision* _____. You follow the vision publicly when you enthusiastically share it with others.

Apply

Write down a simple plan for personally, practically and publicly following the vision of your church. Then put at least one of those steps into action this week.

Study 4

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow With Accountability

Team Review: What action step did you take last week to embrace the vision — personally, practically and publicly?

Assess: Why is accountability so important in leadership and followership today?

Insights and Ideas

Most people would readily admit that accountability is important in life and leadership. James said, “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” (James 3:1). Paul said, “So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God” (Romans 14:12). And Jesus said, “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them” (Matthew 25:19). All of us will be held accountable.

What impact does accountability have on a team? Author and consultant Patrick Lencioni offers some great insight on accountability in what he calls the five dysfunctions of a team:

- *Dysfunction 1: Absence of trust*
- *Dysfunction 2: Fear of conflict*
- *Dysfunction 3: Lack of commitment*
- *Dysfunction 4: Avoidance of accountability*
- *Dysfunction 5: Inattention to results*

How does one dysfunction lead to another? It begins with an absence of trust among team members, resulting in a fear of conflict. In other words, when we don’t trust one another, we’re not willing to disagree or engage in hard conversations. As a result, we lack commitment when there is a decision to go a new direction. It doesn’t mean it’s a wrong decision; it’s just not a decision we agree with, and because we don’t agree with the decision, we naturally avoid accountability. The last thing we want is for someone to hold us accountable to implement a decision we don’t support. That lack of accountability causes us to stop paying attention to results.

We’ve all seen churches that stopped paying attention to results, ultimately becoming insider focused and losing sight of the mission God called them to fulfill. We’ve all seen organizations that stopped paying attention to the scorecard before multiple years of decline thrust them into irrelevance, or even bankruptcy. Here’s the truth we have to embrace: Accountability isn’t fun, but inattention to results leads to a less-fun outcome.

If you want to be a great follower, don’t avoid accountability. Embrace the direction of your team, set specific and measurable goals, and then be willing to let someone else hold your feet to the fire. Just because the direction isn’t the choice you would have made if you were in charge doesn’t mean it’s not the right direction. Mature followers understand this insight and are better for it.

Reflect and Discuss

1. What scares followers and leaders about accountability?
2. How have you seen an avoidance of accountability negatively impact a team, church or organization?
3. What’s a practical way to ensure accountability is a part of goals, team performance and ministry progress?

Apply

What is your attitude toward accountability? Rather than waiting for someone to hold you accountable, share your goals with someone, and ask that person to hold you accountable. Arrange to meet once a month and track your progress.

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow With Accountability

Assess: Why is accountability so important in leadership and followership today?

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The five dysfunctions of a team:

- *Dysfunction 1: Absence of* _____.
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- *Dysfunction 3: Lack of* _____.
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- *Dysfunction 5: Inattention to* _____.

How does one dysfunction lead to another? It begins with an absence of trust among team members, resulting in a fear of conflict. In other words, when we don't trust one another, we're not willing to disagree or engage in hard conversations. As a result, we lack commitment when there is a decision to go a new direction. It doesn't mean it's a wrong decision; it's just not a decision we agree with, and because we don't agree with the decision, we naturally avoid accountability. The last thing we want is for someone to hold us accountable to implement a decision we don't support. That lack of accountability causes us to stop paying attention to results.

Apply

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Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow as a Servant Leader

Team Review: What is one goal or area for which you are asking someone to hold you accountable?

Assess: What does servant leadership look like as a follower?

Insights and Ideas

Followership implies a commitment to serve someone else. Interestingly, serving is also the essence of the most effective form of leadership. In short, serving is at the core of followership *and* leadership. Jesus said, “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28). Whether you’re a follower, or a leader, servanthood is the fuel that propels ministry forward.

Followers exhibit servant leadership when they possess two traits. These traits have a profound effect on our ability to follow well, and they prepare our character for greater levels of responsibility. How we follow is the prophet of how we will lead.

1. *Humble service.* Both of these qualities — humility and service — fight against our natural desires. Author Richard Foster once said, “More than any other single way the grace of humility is worked into our lives through the discipline of service ... nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh whines against service but it screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition.”

When humility and service are combined, the motive and method of leadership are sanctified. Humility keeps self-centeredness and personal kingdom building from driving our motive. And service ensures our method for leading keeps the good of others in focus. In other words, power should benefit, not burden, others. Some leaders exhibit one trait; few exhibit both.

2. *Entitlement restraint.* It’s easy in leadership to shift into an entitlement mode, where you feel you deserve certain privileges, honor and acknowledgement. It’s one thing for people to give those to you; it’s another for you to seek after them. This same feeling is common when you’re a follower who feels overlooked or underappreciated. The best followers are servant leaders who exhibit restraint when it comes to entitlement. Simply put, servant leaders aren’t hung up on the three P’s: perks, position and promotion. They do their job and trust God to take care of the rest in His timing.

A good litmus test of servant leadership is found in Elisabeth Elliot’s words: “The best way to find out whether you really have a servant’s heart is to see what your reaction is when somebody treats you like one.”

Reflect and Discuss

1. What’s one of the best examples of servant leadership you’ve seen on your team?
2. What would be a practical expression of “humble service”?
3. Which entitlement is your biggest temptation? Why is it so hard to show restraint when you feel like you deserve the three P’s: perks, position and promotion?

Apply

Do a personal audit on your commitment to servant leadership. Which trait is your biggest challenge: humble service or entitlement restraint? What can you do this week to model servant leadership at work and at home?

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow as a Servant Leader

Assess: What does servant leadership look like as a follower?

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26–28).

Two traits of servant leaders:

1. *Humble* _____. “More than any other single way the grace of humility is worked into our lives through the discipline of service ... nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh whines against service but it screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition.” — Richard Foster

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2. *Entitlement* _____. The best followers are servant leaders who exhibit restraint when it comes to entitlement. Simply put, servant leaders aren’t hung up on the three P’s: perks, positions and promotion. They do their job and trust God to take care of the rest in His timing.

“The best way to find out whether you really have a servant’s heart is to see what your reaction is when somebody treats you like one.” — Elisabeth Elliot

Apply

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Study 6

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow as a Team Player

Team Review: What step did you take last week to be a servant leader at work and at home?

Assess: What qualities mark the best team players?

Insights and Ideas

To fully realize a vision, the entire team has to work and lead in the same direction. Ecclesiastes 4:9 says, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.” To be a follower who produces a good return on your labor, you need to exhibit the traits of a great team player. Being a “team player” is one of our team values at 7 City Church. We describe a team player as someone who exemplifies the following:

1. *Vision supporter.* Team players aren’t inventing new visions that are out of alignment with the vision of the house. They get behind the singular vision of the church and avoid vision drifting, platform building and silo thinking. When coach Lou Holtz arrived at the University of Notre Dame, he removed the players’ names from the back of their football jerseys. In an interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, Holtz said, “You’re playing for ND; you’re not playing for yourself. To win, it’s always about putting the team first.”
2. *Relationship builder.* Effective teams take time to get to know one another. The more you know someone, the more you’re willing to trust them. Author and consultant Patrick Lencioni said, “In the context of building a team, trust is the confidence among team members that their peers’ intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. In essence, teammates must get comfortable being vulnerable with one another.”
3. *Culture enhancer.* Culture is “the way we do things around here.” If you go to another country, you will bump into its culture the moment you step off the plane. You’ll encounter its governing structure, language, clothing, food, music and a hundred other things revealing how things are done in that country. Every church and organization has a culture too, a way of doing things. The best team players work hard to *learn* the culture, *live* the culture and *lead* in a way that reinforces the values of the culture.
4. *People developer.* Great team players are always expanding the team by embracing the words of the apostle Paul when he challenged leaders to equip the body of Christ for “works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12–13). That’s great advice — not just for leaders, but for followers too.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Which quality of a team player is your greatest strength?
2. Which quality of a team player is your biggest challenge? Why?
3. What can be done to cultivate the four qualities of a team player in your setting?

Apply

Identify one step you can take to become a better vision supporter, relationship builder, culture enhancer, and people developer on your team. What is a resource (book, article, podcast or person) that could help you improve? Who would be willing to hold you accountable?

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow as a Team Player

Assess: What qualities mark the best team players?

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor” (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

Four qualities of a team player:

1. _____ *supporter*. Team players aren't inventing new visions that are out of alignment with the vision of the house. They get behind the singular vision of the church and avoid vision drifting, platform building and silo thinking.
2. _____ *builder*. “In the context of building a team, trust is the confidence among team members that their peers' intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group. In essence, teammates must get comfortable being vulnerable with one another.”
— Patrick Lencioni
3. _____ *enhancer*. Every church and organization has a culture, a way of doing things. The best team players work hard to *learn* the culture, *live* the culture and *lead* in a way that reinforces the values of the culture.
4. _____ *developer*. Paul challenged leaders to equip the body of Christ for “works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:12–13).

Apply

Identify one step you can take to become a better vision supporter, relationship builder, culture enhancer and people developer on your team. What is a resource (book, article, podcast or person) that could help you improve? Who would be willing to hold you accountable?



Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow as a Hard Worker

Team Review: What step did you take, and what resource did you access, to become a better team player?

Assess: In practical terms, what does it mean to be a hard worker?

Insights and Ideas

It's easy to assume we have a strong work ethic; after all, nobody wants to be a lazy sloth. However, an honest evaluation can sometimes reveal unseen gaps. Scrolling endlessly through your favorite social media channel, gaming on the job, and engaging in long hallway conversations are not reflections of hard work. Yet how often do these activities distract us?

The apostle Paul gives us a picture of hard work when he writes, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23–24).

As followers of Jesus, we recognize that He is our true employer. So, how would Jesus score your performance on the job? Are you working with all your heart? What kind of reward would He give you for the work you do?

To put this in really practical terms, hard work generally reflects three qualities:

1. **Effectiveness:** *The right priorities are in focus.* Followers are only effective if they are allocating their time, talent and resources to the priorities that matter to the organization for which they work. You might deliver outstanding results on a priority that matters to you, but if it doesn't matter to the organization, can you really claim to be effective on the job? Efficiently accomplishing the wrong priorities isn't a definition of success. Effectiveness for followers begins by identifying what matters most to their leaders.
2. **Efficiency:** *Priorities are executed smoothly.* Once they identify clear priorities, hard workers execute them efficiently. They implement systems that deliver the results their leaders desire. To describe the qualities of a good system, author Nelson Searcy uses the acronym S.Y.S.T.E.M.: Saves You Stress, Time, Energy and Money. When you can implement solutions to attain your leader's highest priorities in a way that reduces stress, maximizes time, leverages energy, and saves money, you are moving in the right direction.
3. **Excellence:** *Priorities are executed with quality.* Finally, a hard-working follower does his or her job with excellence. Mediocrity isn't the goal. Doing enough to get by isn't success. Give your best, recognizing the Lord deserves nothing less.

When these three qualities mark your work, you become the type of follower leaders like to promote. They can trust you to focus on the important things and deliver results quickly and with high levels of quality.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Who's the hardest worker you've ever known? What made that person a hard worker?
2. How do Paul's words in Colossians 3:23–24 challenge you?
3. Which of the three traits of hard work do you need to focus on most?

Apply

Take a few minutes in prayer to ask the Lord to evaluate your effectiveness, efficiency and excellence as a worker on your job. You're ultimately working for Him, and His perspective should matter most. Ask the Lord how you can improve, and then seek Him for wisdom to take the right next step.

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow as a Hard Worker

Assess: In practical terms, what does it mean to be a hard worker?

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23–24).

Three qualities of hard work:

1. _____: *The right priorities are in focus.*

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Apply

Take a few minutes in prayer to ask the Lord to evaluate your effectiveness, efficiency and excellence as a worker on your job. You’re ultimately working for Him, and His perspective should matter most. Ask the Lord how you can improve, and then seek Him for wisdom to take the right next step.



Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow With Flux

Team Review: What step did you take to become a harder worker?

Assess: How do you find the balance between pushing your new ideas and simply doing what your leader asks you to do?

Insights and Ideas

If you became the leader of your ministry, organization or church, you would probably like to change something. That's natural and normal. You have fresh ideas, and you see things from a different perspective. The challenge as a follower is knowing when, and how, to bring those ideas and perspectives to bear in the place where God has called you to serve. The key is mastering the two sides of flux:

1. *The "push" side of flux.* Authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner describe the "push" side of flux perfectly when they talk about "challenging the process." This practice involves challenging the status quo, and taking risks, so the organization can improve. Young leaders, and people who are new to an organization, love this practice because it provides an opportunity to make things better. Every organization needs the "push" side of flux. Jesus said, "No one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins" (Mark 2:22). It takes maturity to know when to pour out your new ideas to your leader. Push, but do so with wisdom, sensitivity and a teachable spirit.
2. *The "pull" side of flux.* While there are times to push by "challenging the process," there are also times to pull back, yield to your leader, and be sensitive to what's important to him or her. Pushing your ideas too hard can break trust, permanently handicap your ability to lead up, or spotlight immaturities that you're unable to see. First Peter 5:5 says, "In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders." Learning to pull back and yield is a sincere expression of submission.

Both leaders and followers must engage the push and pull of flux with humility. Peter continues verse 5 with these words: "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another." Those first three words — "all of you" — are addressed to elders and young leaders. For young leaders (or followers), a response of humility will help you learn the most nuanced and less black-and-white aspects of leadership. For leaders, a response of humility may be the key to the next breakthrough in your church as you listen to the input of your team. The flux between pushing forward and pulling back is ultimately a tension to manage.

Reflect and Discuss

1. When was a time you were challenged to push forward as a follower? How did it go?
2. When was a time you pulled back as a follower? What did you learn in that process?
3. How can you practically manage the tension between pushing forward and pulling back?

Apply

In what area do you need to push forward, or where do you need to pull back? What would be the best and most honorable way to proceed? Is the timing right? Sometimes the best step is to have an honest, respectful and cordial conversation with your leader.

Followership: Eight Keys to Becoming a Great Follower

Follow With Flux

Assess: How do you find the balance between pushing your new ideas and simply doing what your leader asks you to do?

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