

Biblical Principles of Dealing With A Resistant CM Leader

Regarding a resistant team leader

By Steve Alley

Ministry is about people. Working with people brings multiple layers of challenges. We don't all see the ministry through the same "lens." We all have different gifts and experiences that affect our calling. We all have emotional "scars" and fears that affect our reactions to life. Those of us in leadership have been called to lead and coordinate this "soup" of human emotions called the ministry team. "Getting it right" is a very complex challenge.

When we have a team leader under us who is resistant to change, we need to deal with that person according to scripture, and in line with Jesus' examples; while also protecting the ministry.

Regarding Your Own "Condition"

1. How is your submission to God's will?
 - a. Is Jesus personal in your life?
 - b. Is there ego or pride present in you?
2. Do you have a clear view of calling and purpose?
3. Do you have a clear view of ministry vision?
4. Do you understand the truth about the situation?
5. Do you understand the risks and consequences?
 - a. His/her personal rejection?
 - b. The effects on the CM?
 - c. The effects on the church?

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- Is there ego or pride in me? Do I "think more highly" of myself "than I ought to think"?
 - Do I understand all I need to understand about the situation?
 - Do I understand the risks and consequences of my actions?

Regarding The Resistant Team Leader

1. Is there a relationship with him/her?
2. Do you understand his/her views, fears, perspectives (compassion without compromise)?
3. Do you understand his/her service and commitment (respect)?
4. Do you understand his/her hesitancy to obey or follow?
5. Does he/she have a "hard heart"?
6. Does he/she bear a "grudge" about something?
7. Is there ego/pride in him/her?

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- Do I understand his/her views, fears, and perspectives?
 - Have I developed a relationship with him/her (earned his/her respect)?
 - Have I sacrificially served him/her?

Galatians 6:1-6 – *"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load. Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor."*

8. Have you washed his/her feet? (Shown support, humility, sacrifice for)

John 13: 2-9 – *"The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God; so He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured*

water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Regarding The Options For Action

1. Understand the danger of compromise.
 - a. The "slippery slope" of lowering expectations/standards and the effects on the CM.
 - b. The "message" that is sent to the person if nothing is done.
 - c. Compromise is only valuable if it involves movement toward the goal.
2. Consider the timing.
 - a. Is "now" a good time? Will there be a better time?
 - b. Understand the pressure or expectation from the senior pastor, etc. – is this part of a larger picture?
 - c. Is this connected with other changes at the same time?
 - d. What might be the consequences of confronting? His/her negative reactions – possible team loss?
 - e. What might be the consequences if he/she has positive reactions?
 - f. Is there time to deepen the relationship and earn trust before you confront?
 - g. Is there time for a probation period first (baby steps toward change)?
3. Consider how to correct, rebuke, encourage.
 - a. Personal – just you and the person.
 - b. With others as witnesses.

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- There may not be a "good time" to do this.
 - Could he/she possibly "taste" the new style and enjoy it?
 - Are we ready for the most negative consequences?

The Leadership Principles of Jesus

1. He "walked among them" to understand them
 - a. "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52)
 - b. "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9: 35, 36)
 - c. "And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.'" (Mark 2:15-17)

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- Have I "walked among" him/her and encouraged her?
 - Is there more time to "recline at table" with him/her?

2. He spoke clearly about what was expected of us. His standards were clear.

- a. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit...those who mourn... the meek...those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...the merciful...the pure in heart... the peacemakers...those who are persecuted for righteousness because of me...”* (Matthew 5:1-11)
- b. *“You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world...let your light so shine before men that they see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.”* (Matthew 5:13-16)
- c. *“...anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgement.”* (Matthew 5:21)
- d. *“...anyone who looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* (Matthew 5:28)
- e. *“...let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ ‘no.’”* (Matthew 5:37)
- f. *“...if someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also...if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well...if someone forces you to go with him 1 mile, go with him two miles...love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.”* (Matthew 5:39-48)

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- **Have I made the standards clear enough to understand?**
 - **Is there any chance that he/she doesn't know or understand the standards?**

3. He listened to comments, needs, and fears.

- a. *“Sometime later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, ‘Do you want to get well?’ ‘Sir,’ the invalid replied, ‘I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.’ At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.”* (John 5: 1-9)

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- **Have I listened to his/her fears, needs, and comments; while still following the pastor's wishes or upholding the standards?**
 - **I need to understand, without compromising.**

As with many challenging decisions that you face in the ministry, you must consider your options in light of the biblical principles. There is no real “black and white” answer that is applicable to every situation. Jesus dealt with Peter differently than He dealt with the Scribes and Pharisees because He took into consideration who they were and what their “heart” was like. You have to ask Jesus to help you do that as well.

Regardless of the situation or who the person is, you must NEVER compromise the overall ministry or put the children's safety at risk. The children's ministry is not the place to show mercy and grace when it may threaten the children. Consistency and fairness must be coupled with strength and justice. If a team member resists your leadership or refuses to abide by the standards that you have established, and he/she has not improved after being encouraged or warned, he/she may need to be “retired.”

Jesus taught us much about “old wineskins” in Mark 22. If you have tried to “pour new wine” into an “old wineskin” team member, it would be better to ask him/her to step away from the ministry. Remember, you are the shepherd of the ministry. You must protect the ministry from “wolves.”