

The 7 minefields of Visionary Pioneers

by George Verwer

This sermon delves into seven minefields that visionary leaders may encounter, including areas of exaggeration, dishonesty, pride, boastfulness, judgmentalism, generalizations, and discouragement. It emphasizes the importance of honesty, humility, and perseverance in leadership, cautioning against pitfalls that can lead to moral and spiritual downfall.

Scripture: Proverbs 12:22, Romans 12:3, Philippians 2:3, 1 Corinthians 13:4, Matthew 7:1, Proverbs 18:17, Psalm 31:24

Topics: "Leadership Challenges", "Integrity in Leadership"

Description

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Transcript

I've shared some of this in connecting with my book, Confessions of a Toxic Perfectionist, as I admit some of the mistakes, some of the things that I believe are clearly toxic, some would say sinful. Praise God for forgiveness. But in this brief time together, I wanted to share especially seven sort of minefields.

For those who are visionary, sometimes they're classified as driven, not always a very kind word. But of course, does the Holy Spirit not push people or drive people these are sometimes in a semantic problem, playing the game of words. But I've admired so many pioneers, those I've met, and those I've read about those I've heard about.

And of course, they are a primary target. Remember, in the book of Acts, a group said they would not eat until Paul was dead, a clear conspiracy against Paul, a great leader. And there's clearly a conspiracy against leaders who are gifted, they have enormous potential, they may have a great knowledge of the Word of God.

Certain kinds of people are especially impressed by a speaker who has a great knowledge of the Word of God. Knowledge of the Word of God is important, but it's only one of many characteristics that a pioneer visionary leader trying to start a new organization trying to plant a new church really must have to be there for the long term and not be another casualty in our hearts break as we read about those. So these are seven areas where easily we fall and make a mess.

Of course, I always keep in mind my word messiology, that even in the midst of a mess, God works. So this is just one short message. This is not all the truth about any one subject.

But the first area I believe that I failed in this area is exaggeration. I think exaggeration is an epidemic among human beings, but especially among biblical Christians who have a vision. Often in trying to convince people about that vision, or reporting what God is doing supposedly, in order to influence people in order to raise money they exaggerate.

And many will fail to classify it as basically lying. We need to be absolutely committed to the truth. We'll probably not score 100%.

I was fanatically committed to tell the truth. I've hardly ever had anyone accuse me of lying, but certainly not scored 100%. So beware of that.

It's tricky, because sometimes it is hard to know what the truth is. Even when I went to Seville, I was given these statistics about numbers who came to Christ, about churches planted because of them. But in my other conversations, I failed to see that that was fully the true picture.

It would take quite a bit of research for me to really get the full true picture. So sometimes it's important just not to say anything. The second area is more horrific in many ways, and it's the tendency to become dishonest.

How sad it is that a number of great visionary leaders have been dishonest in the area of finance. Some have been actually caught and found guilty of perjury. No, of when you take someone else's material and you use it.

The word's not popping into my head, but I think you know it. We can make statements that really have a ring of dishonesty. We need to be, before the Lord, totally honest.

That's hard in shame-based culture, because if you stand up to confess some area of failure, somebody's going to go really, probably very hard at you. Of course, the third pitfall, the third mine that may explode, is pride. How subtle it is that pride can come in.

And we should never think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Read those verses in Romans 12. And again, match that up with Philippians, esteeming others better than yourself.

It's amazing how the enemy seems to have a whole range of areas where pride moves in and ruins and spoils the situation. And then fourthly, boastfulness. I'm sure sometimes in my excitement in trying to convince people about something, I'm sure it came across as boastful, and maybe it was.

I think we can be self-deceived. So in my heart, the last thing I want to do is boast. We know whatever we do is God's people.

It's because he gives grace, he gives strength. We also know without our co-workers, without our team, without our supporters, often without our families, you know, we would not be able to do what we're doing. We can also fall in the pit of being boastful about our organization and continue through life very ignorant of other great works of God.

We're mainly caught up in our own work. You can sometimes tell that with people as they go on and on telling you about their work and their vision, never ask you a single question about what you're doing.

Beware of subtle forms of boastfulness.

In my life, things would have been far better if I just slowed down and thought about what I was about to say. But unfortunately, my kind of temperament reacts very quickly. I've seen, I've tried to reduce the number of hot buttons that really get me stirred.

But I think I still, even my seniors have some in a couple of weeks, I'm going to be 84. Oh dear. And then fifthly, of course, judgmentalism.

It's so easy when you've got a vision, you're trying to convince people about your vision to come out with negative statements about other people, other groups that are more or less doing the same thing. And you got to make it clear that your vision is greater. Your vision is different.

You might even point out some of the mistakes they make. It seems sometimes people carry a little dirt about other organizations and other people in their pocket. They don't use it except when they absolutely need it.

And maybe they're put under pressure when someone's asking hard questions. All my life, I have people asking me hard questions and I've learned. Not that immediately, I just say, well, that's correct and get to feel really bad about it.

But I want to be a listener and I want to stay away from judgmentalism. But we have to make evaluations. This is not an easy road.

I have tremendous sympathy for leaders, even leaders of nations. To me, to lead a nation virtually is impossible. We elect a man, we put him in a job, we wait for him to do some stupid things, we fire him, then we start with someone else.

Failing to realize that the job we gave a man in the first place is actually impossible. And pastoring some churches today, in some situations, is virtually impossible. And so even though I share this from my heart, I'm not wanting you to suddenly be judgmental of the leader of your church or your movement because you feel he's missing some of these points.

You look at yourself first of all, but there's so serious things for any who might be listening, who are pioneer visionaries, you're really got a vision, you're really going for it. Maybe you have to raise money and I just think you'd be better some of these pitfalls. And then number six, generalizations.

I think you know what a generalization is. We just make a sweeping statement. There's so many of them I've listened to about women.

Now women have them about men. We live in a culture where generalizations just flow. They flow out also in the news media.

This is why I respect people who do serious research and look into the facts before they write something or speak something. In my life I've always been constantly preparing for the next message, studying, researching, asking questions. I had the joy today of having lunch with the head of the senior executive leader of Tear Fund.

What a tremendous ministry focusing on the humanitarian needs of the world and yet always in the name of the Lord Jesus. I remember the founder, George Hoffman, he came to Lagos in 71. We were linked

ever since.

His death was an unfortunate one, but I'm sure some of you support that ministry or similar ministries in your own country. Beware of generalizations and I'm speaking to myself. And then of course number seven, perhaps this is the biggest of all, discouragement.

You're going to, in leadership and efforts to accomplish something great, you're going to have discouragements, you're going to have disappointments, you're going to probably have some people who turn against you. Now in the age of social media you may even have people in social media attacking you and you're not able to give your other side of the story, especially if things end up in a court case. The lawyers say you shouldn't say anything until we get through the court case.

Some court cases go on for years. And so in visionary, dynamic leadership, especially starting something new, your heart is going to be broken. There will be disappointments and discouragements and you have to stay focused on the Lord.

You have to stay positive. You have to keep forgiving and keep feeding on God's word in order to be the man, the woman the Lord wants you to be. Well, there's seven serious things that we really should look at and I'm looking at them myself.

And as my passion is to pass on things that I learned to others, I make an effort to share messages like this one. Feedback from any of you would be appreciated. God bless you.

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