

Improving Leadership Effectiveness II

by J. Oswald Sanders

Effective leadership requires discovering and correcting weaknesses, cultivating strengths, and exerting oneself to lead with zeal and intensity.

Duration: 1:01:35

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:16

Topics: "Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses four important aspects of leadership in the context of the ministry of the new covenant. Firstly, leaders are entrusted with the responsibility of spreading the word of God. Secondly, they are empowered by the Holy Spirit and receive new strength every day. Thirdly, leaders should prioritize eternal matters and walk by faith rather than sight. Lastly, leaders should focus on maintaining healthy relationships and use the Holy Spirit as a lubricant to resolve conflicts. The speaker emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the work of God over individual peace and the need for proper delegation in leadership.

Transcript

Tonight I want to speak about improving our leadership potential. If our leadership can be improved, if we can be better than we are now, then we are under obligation to do it, to be the best that we can be for our Lord. Those under us have a right to expect inspiring and authoritative leadership, and we are under responsibility to give it to them, insofar as it lies within our power.

And I believe the first step is to discover and to correct weaknesses, and to do this sometimes we need to ask a trusted colleague to show us that kind of thing. Do you know, if you get rather a kick out of telling somebody else where they're a bit short, I think you're not the person to do it. The very fact that you enjoy, would enjoy doing it, shows that there's something you have to learn too before you can really help that person.

If we're, if somebody else is overtaken in a fault, we who are spiritual are to restore such in one, but it is to be in the spirit of meekness and considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. So the way in which we show somebody else something that may be less than ideal is very important, but I think that it can be very helpful if we've got somebody whom we know and whom we trust, and we ask them to say, can you see some things in me that are hindering me from being the best I can be for God? Then it can be, they can, they'll do it in a way that will be helpful. I forget who it was, they said the only person whom you can trust

to tell you the truth about yourself is your enemy who hates you and is angry, or one who loves you very dearly.

Those are the two people who'll tell you the truth about yourself. Well, it's wonderful to know where you are in that way. But at the same time, while we are to correct weaknesses, we're also to cultivate strengths, and every one of us have got strengths.

And again, others can sometimes encourage us in this way, and I'm sure of this, that one of the most important tasks we've got in our leadership is to be encouragers, encouragers of our fellow workers, encouragers of those under us, encouragers of those over us. Let us be like Barnabas, a son of encouragement. It's wonderful to have men like that around and women like that around, where after you've been in their company, you go away and you feel strengthened, and that's what encouragement does.

Now, there are strengths that we can cultivate, and there are ways in which we can strengthen ourselves for our work. Have you ever heard about Demosthenes, the great Greek orator? The first time Demosthenes appeared on the stage, he was hissed off because he had a stammer, he had a weak and rather raucous voice, he used to make all kinds of grimaces as he spoke, he had an ugly hitching of his shoulder, and every now and again, you know what, and altogether he was a poor type, and so they hissed him off the platform, but as he went away, he turned around and he said, you'll hear me yet. Well, time went by.

When Demosthenes went home, he shaved half his head, right down there, well that saved him from going out into company, you're not very welcome when you've only got half your hair on, and so he was able to give himself to practicing his elocution. So he started and he'd do his elocution in front of a mirror and he'd watch the faces that he made and try to correct it, and then his stammer, how could he correct that? He used to practice his elocution with pebbles in his mouth, and that helped him to overcome his stammer. Then his voice was weak, how did he overcome that? Well, he'd go down to the shores of the Aegean Sea and he'd compete with the waves until his voice grew stronger.

Then this hitching of the shoulder, how could he get over that? Well, that was quite simple, he just suspended a sword from the ceiling with the sharp point on his shoulder and he lost all desire to hitch. Well, the time came when the nation, the Greek nation, was at war with Philip, and Demosthenes and Aristotle were invited to make orations. It was to stir up the nation.

Well, Aristotle went first and he made a wonderful oration, it was tremendous. And when he'd finished, all the people said, what wonderful oratory, and they were praising Aristotle up to the sky. Then it came to be Demosthenes' turn, and he delivered his oration.

And after he'd finished his oration, what happened? Come, let us fight Philip! They heard him. They went and they fought and defeated Philip. Here was a man who had every strike against him, and yet this one thing I do, you'll hear me yet.

And everything else was sacrificed to make himself an effective orator, not who could draw attention to his own oratory, but who could move the nation. And I believe that this can be so with us. Who of us haven't got our weaknesses and things that need to be strengthened? They can be strengthened.

Our weaknesses can become our strength. Wasn't that what happened to him? The very things that disqualified him, he triumphed over and they became assets. I think if we look at it in a positive way like that, and don't get discouraged because of these things, but say, Lord, you can help me to overcome this thing in such a way that what the devil intended to be a hindrance is going to be a stepping stone to greater usefulness.

And I believe that if we approach it in a positive way, even our failures and our weaknesses can help us to rise higher and be more effective in God's service. Now, there are some limitations, some things that limit and inhibit the highest type of leadership. And I'd just like to mention these things so that we may be conscious if they need to be dealt with.

One of those things is conservatism. Now, it's good to have some conservative people around. It's very bad if everybody takes off.

It's good to have somebody to hang on to the coattails of the imaginative person. But to be too conservative means that you won't be a good leader. An ultra-conservative person doesn't make a good leader.

They may help in a team. But I believe that conservatism, an unwillingness to accept change, can be a real hindrance, a tendency to leave things as they are for the sake of peace. I don't think that's good leadership.

And if you find that you've got that kind of temperament, then I think probably you ought to face up to it and try to improve it. Because that kind of thing leads, you might have peace, but it's the peace of death and we want the peace of life. Another thing that inhibits leadership is defensiveness.

If we are always ready to resent criticism, if the moment we are criticized or checked our hackles go up and we begin to justify ourselves, that isn't helpful. There is always some basis of truth in any criticism. It's seldom that we can say there is nothing in that at all.

And so let us abandon a defensiveness. Let us, if we're checked, if people show us what's wrong, let us accept it. They may do it in a wrong spirit.

That doesn't matter. Let me take what good there is in it and reject the rest, throw it out. But there will always be something that we can profit by.

So don't be over defensive and constantly vindicating yourself. The Lord says, leave that to me, vengeance is mine, I will repay. Let him vindicate you.

A person who is timid in faith and is unwilling to take risks in the interest of the kingdom won't make a very inspiring leader. You see, one of the important parts of a leader's task is to communicate faith to others. It's not sufficient to have faith yourself.

You've got to communicate it to others. God promised Joshua that every place the sole of his foot would tread upon, he'd give it to him. But Joshua had to communicate his faith and confidence in God to the people and get them to be willing to put their feet on the land.

And this is our task. And if we ourselves are timid in faith and we're reluctant to step out on God because there's a risk involved, well, we're not going to find that our people will be willing to do that. If we are

people who always like to play safe, we're not going to make much advance in the work of God.

A reluctance to accept responsibility for failure. Now, there always will be some failures. And if we tend to pass the blame for our failure on somebody under us, then we're not going to be a very successful leader.

If I am in a position of leadership, I am responsible if a thing fails. Let me take it and not blame somebody under me. I was just reading just a day or two ago about Churchill, how when, even though it was not his responsibility at all, it wasn't what he did, he took the whole responsibility for the failure of one tremendous thing.

You know, that does a tremendous amount to people who are under you if they say he's not going to shuffle the blame onto me. Well, he could have done it rightfully, but he didn't. He took the responsibility.

That's my responsibility. It's my failure in leadership. Well, I'm sure that that attitude will cultivate confidence.

Another thing that inhibits leadership is perfectionism. You say, well, shouldn't we aim at being perfect? I think we should aim at excellence. But the perfectionist, a person who must have everything done perfectly, a person who sets impossible standards and then kicks themselves afterwards because they haven't attained to them, is not going to be a helpful leader.

Perfectionism is, it has its value, and certainly the person who does things thoroughly is a person to be admired. But I don't think it helps in good leadership to be that type, to set impossible goals and then create a sense of guilt when those goals are not attained. We've got to come to terms with the possible.

Now, I'm not talking about that God can't do the impossible. You know what I mean. I think we need to set reasonable things and things that are reasonably attainable.

But if we make impossible demands, then we're going to discourage those with whom we are working. Another thing that makes leadership less than is desirable is if we cannot keep a confidence. Or, if our wives or husbands can't keep a confidence.

Many men never attain the highest leadership because their wives can't keep a confidence. And the same refers to men. Keeping a confidence is one of the most important things, especially in the kind of thing that you and I are in touch with, in connection with other people.

When we gain their confidence and they open their hearts and then they tell us things that are very intimate, and then somehow afterwards it comes back to them through another channel, we've lost our influence over that person. And it can have a tremendous effect. My wife used to say to me, dear, if you've got something that you don't want other people to know, don't tell me and then nobody can winkle it out of me.

Isn't it true that in groups like ours, you want to know things, you're interested in each other, and there are ways of asking questions that if you say yes, you answer it, and if you say no, you answer it, you just can't get out of it. So she said, don't tell me and then nobody can get it out of me. Well, I think that's good.

I told her everything I could and everything that was, she was trustworthy, but even then I didn't tell her everything, and she didn't want me to. But keep a confidence, never let it out, and then you'll find people that trust you. They say, I know that I can open my heart, and it's safe.

Procrastination in the vain hope that the problem will just go away, it doesn't. It gets bigger. A leader who procrastinates will soon cease to be a leader.

He's not a real leader, yes? To procrastinate, put off doing it, yes, to put off doing it. I think that leads to mediocre leadership, putting off decisions. Delay doesn't solve anything, or very rarely solves it.

All it does is to make the situation a bit worse. One other thing, and that is a tendency to sacrifice depth for area. That was a statement that was made to me when I was a young man that I found very helpful.

Dr. Graham Scroggie, the Bible teacher, was in our city for several months, and I saw quite a lot of him, and he apparently saw a tendency to sacrifice depth for area, A-R-E-A. I'll explain it in a moment. He said to me, Sanders, never sacrifice depth for area.

Now what he meant was this, don't spread yourself so wide that your work will be shallow. You see, if instead of spreading yourself wide, you confine yourself to a narrow channel, it will go down deeper. And he saw that I was spreading too widely, and there wasn't depth in what I was doing, it was shallow.

And so that word came to me as a real challenge. Don't sacrifice depth for area. In other words, don't take on so much that what you do won't be well and deeply done.

I think that is something that, in your type of work where there are so many things you could do, sometimes you do better work by doing less rather than more, because the thing can go deeper. Now in that eighth verse that we read in Romans chapter 12, by the way, in chapter 12 and verse 1, you have the aorist tense in the Greek, the aorist tense of consecration. It says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies.

This is a crisis act. It's the aorist tense that means something that's done now once and for all. By this critical act, present your bodies a living sacrifice.

Now after that, there are 36 present tenses in this twelfth chapter of Romans, 36 of them, and each one of them is the, Paul is saying, these are the things that should flow out of that great act of consecration. It should be expressed in this way, and if you go through, I think you'll find it correct, you'll find there are 36 different things that he says. And the one to which I wish to draw your attention is in verse 8, the second last one.

He that ruleth with diligence. Now that's the King James Version. The New English Bible puts it this way.

If you are a leader, exert yourself to lead. If you are a leader, exert yourself to lead. William Barclay in his translation says, if called on to supply leadership, do it with zeal.

And that's the word we were thinking of the other day. If God is calling me to leadership, then exert myself. No foot-dragging, no laziness, no self-indulgence, exert yourself to lead.

Put something into it. It's quite easy for a person who's elected to a place of leadership just to coast along. You have been elected leader, all right, there we are, the rest of the people do the work.

Not so. Exert yourself. If you're called to leadership, put everything you've got into it.

Do it with zeal. And that is going to make all the difference to the people among whom you work. So, we need to ask ourselves, is this our type of leadership? Are we really exerting ourselves to do it? Is there

intensity in it? I didn't say is there tension in it.

There's a tension that's wrong, but there's an intensity that is good. It doesn't harm the person either who's got the intensity. Sometimes we're afraid of being too intense.

Well, the right kind of intensity doesn't harm the person, but it does a great deal to the work. You remember that the Lord Jesus was always zealous. He was always zealous.

There was never a time when he wasn't zealous. And his friends misunderstood him. They said, why? He's beside himself.

He's lost his senses. His enemy says, he's got a devil. And when his disciples saw the zeal of the Lord when he went into the temple and found it filled with oxen and sheep and doves and money changers' tables, when they saw Jesus go in there and plait that scourge of cords and drive them out, I was upsetting the money tables and hear the money over the floor and the men scrabbling after it and the cattle and the sheep going out and the doves.

Until at last he was standing there alone. The disciples couldn't understand it. They couldn't believe that this was the same person, gentle Jesus, meek and mild.

Not much meek and mild about that, was there? What does it say? It says, then they remembered that it was written, Psalm 69 verse 9 I think it is, it was written, the zeal for thy house shall consume me. Well, here was the Lord, full of zeal. Everything that he did was done with intensity.

And yet you never find the Lord hurried, bustled. You never find him out of breath. And yet all the time there was that intensity underneath that kept him steadily working, doing the will of the Father.

This is something that is so wonderful. Something that we should covet. Now Paul showed something of the same zeal and something of the same intensity.

Adolf Deissmann had this to say about him. He said, the lightning of the Damascus road found plenty of inflammable material in the soul of the young persecutor. I like that.

Found, I'll read it again. The lightning of the Damascus road found plenty of inflammable material in the life of the young persecutor. Is there plenty of inflammable material there? Something the flame of God can kindle on.

Then he went on to say, we see the flames shoot up and we feel the glow then kindled, lost none of its brightness in Paul the aged. There he was in his youth flaming for God in his old age. There he was flaming for God.

Exert yourself to lead. Very wonderful. When you saw our brother Dr. Lockyer, what a wonderful thing.

There at that age, there's the same blaze going up. Dr. Canon Nash in Melbourne was the founder and the principal of the Melbourne Bible Institute. Mr. Nash told me when he was 80, he said, the Lord has given me, he retired at 70 and then at 80, he felt that God had still had something for him.

And he told me, he said to me, the Lord gave me the assurance that I was to have 10 more years of fruitful service. That was at 80. Now he was 91 at the time I'm speaking.

I was taking a meeting, a missionary meeting at a large convention in Melbourne and quite a considerable number of young people had come forward to offer their lives for missionary service. And the old man was sitting behind me. He was very frail.

But with this, very crowded young people before me and I turned to the old man. I said, Mr. Nash, would you mind coming and commending these young people to God? And see the old man, very frail, tottered over to the pulpit. And then he lifted up his hands.

And there was one of the most wonderful monologues I ever heard. He talked to God. It was just as though God was there.

He lifted that whole congregation. I'll guarantee those young people will never forget it to the end of their life. My wife said to me afterwards, I was scared to look at him.

I thought he'd take off. There it was. He'd had 10 more years of fruitful service.

He said, you know, I haven't been able to get about, but God just brings people to me. He brings groups of ministers to him. He'd go to a retreat house and perhaps every few days there'd be another lot of ministers.

And he said, the last 10 years have been probably the most fruitful years of my life. There it was. The zeal of God.

Zeal maintained. Right there he was, 91. Still going strong.

So if you're called to leadership, exert yourself to lead. Do it with zeal. And you'll see the fruitage of it.

Now another thing that I think can help us and increase our effectiveness in our leadership is to cultivate the art of listening. Now I know you've got it, but perhaps it can be increased. The art of listening.

And it is an art. A sympathetic ear is a tremendously valuable asset. I remember one of our younger men had been put in a position of responsibility and leadership.

And I went round to the field where he was and I was talking to one of the missionaries. And he said, you know, he won't listen. He said, I try to tell him the problem, but before ever I've got the problem fully explained, he's telling me the solution.

He said, and I haven't yet stated the problem. He won't listen. You see, listening is not just impatiently waiting until you can get your own view across.

And that's what we rather tend to do, especially if we are inclined to be compulsive talkers. What is listening? Listening is a genuine attempt to understand the viewpoint, the problem the other person wants to share with us, to let them tell the whole thing, to let them unload themselves upon us. And you know, the very unloading of that problem means that the problem is half solved.

The very sharing of it does something. The very stating of it and putting it into words releases something within them. But they won't do it unless we are good listeners, unless we just quietly and without prejudging the issue either.

It's so easy to prejudge the issue or think you've got the answer before you've really heard the full question. There is a legal maxim, never trust an ex parte statement. That is, never trust a statement which is from only one side.

There are always two sides to a question. And even though you hear one person's side of a problem and it seems unanswerable, you say, there can't be any other side to that. Don't accept that.

There's sure to be another side and you may be surprised when you equally listen to the other side. So I believe that's quite an important thing. Don't prejudge the issue.

Be sensitive to the problem or the need is very important and you handle it better by listening than by talking. Oliver Wendell Holmes was asked by a politician, what's the best way of getting people to vote for you and holding their loyalty? This is what he said, to be able to listen to others in a sympathetic and understanding manner is perhaps the best mechanism in the world for getting along with people and tying up their friendship for good. I'll read it again.

To be able to listen to others in a sympathetic and understanding manner is perhaps the best mechanism in the world for getting along with people and holding and tying up their friendship for good. He said, too few people try the white magic of being good listeners. Too many people, too few people try the white magic of being good listeners.

Now, here's something worth practicing. I remember another man saying to me when somebody had been unloading on him and they were a bit overwrought, he said, I wasn't going to have him weeping on my shoulder. I said, well, brother, that's exactly what your shoulder's for.

That's what our shoulders are for. If they can't weep on our shoulder, whose shoulder can they weep on? My colleague in Singapore used to have two extra handkerchiefs in his drawer. When somebody came in, you know, and they're burdened and problems there, you know how easy it is perhaps for the tears to trickle, he'd just slip out a handkerchief and there it was.

And, you know, just the very thoughtfulness of it immediately established rapport and confidence. There was nothing to it, but there was a tremendous amount to it. Sympathetic understanding.

And this is the thing that helps to bind others to you and enables you to help solve their problems. One hundred years ago, Hudson Taylor wrote a letter to Benjamin Broomhall, who was the secretary of the China Inland Mission. It was in 1879, just over a hundred years ago.

Now, he was a simple and yet a very astute man. People who met him, they just couldn't understand how he was able to do what he did because he was such a simple, uncomplicated man. And yet he had the gift of saying tremendously significant things in deceptively simple language.

And you'll find that if you read through his books, some of his statements are so simple and yet they're so profound. He was a hundred years off and ahead of his time. And one of the things which he stated I believe can be a very, very helpful thing for us as we contemplate our leadership.

I'll read it over and I'll be going over it in detail so you'll be able to take it down if you want to, but let me read it over first. He said, he was speaking about the responsibilities of leadership. He said, the all important thing is to improve the character of the work, to deepen the piety, devotion and success of the workers, to remove stones of stumbling if possible, to oil wheels when they stink, to amend what is

defective, to supplement what is lacking.

And then he said, this is no easy matter where suitable men are wanting or only in the course of formation that I may be used of God at least in some measure is my prayer. Now, that sounds very simple and yet when you analyze it, you find that it covers practically the whole area of leadership. We'll take it first.

The first one, to improve the character of the work. Well that deals with the administrative realm, doesn't it? What is the responsibility of the administrator? To improve the quality of the work. To discover which departments are functioning well and the ones that are not functioning well.

To find out which areas are less than the optimum and to correct them. Sometimes this will involve drawing up better job descriptions, although it's rather interesting that the New Testament has got very few job descriptions in it. But if we do have them, let them be the very best possible.

And also, another of the important things in the administrative side is to see that the lines of communication are clear, so that there's no lack of communication. It's a lack of communication that creates more problems than practically any other thing. Right decisions may be made, but if they're not communicated, they might just as well not have been made.

So see that the lines of communication are clear. That is to improve the character of the work. Well, you go back and you say, now how can I improve the character of the work that's under my hand? Are there things that I can do to improve it in the administrative realm? That's the first one.

Now what's the next one? To deepen the devotion, the piety, the devotion and success of the workers. Now this has to do with the spiritual tone of the organization. The piety, the devotion and the success of the workers.

Well, who is responsible for the spiritual tone of an organization? The leadership. And each of us in the area of leadership in which we are, we are responsible. The tone of the organization will be taken from its leaders.

It doesn't come from the bottom up. It goes from the top down. And so this is the responsibility of leadership.

The tone of any organization is largely a reflection of the leadership. If the leadership is spiritual, if they are devout, then it will rub off, it will be seen in those who are under them. And also, if the leader can help the worker to be more successful in what they do, can show ways in which their work can be, meet with more success, what are you doing? You're encouraging that person, you're helping them in succeeding in their task and of course that brings job satisfaction.

The third thing is to remove stones of stumbling, if possible. Well, Hudson Taylor put the if possible in there. Sometimes there are stones of stumbling that are very difficult to remove.

But this one, this third point, deals with the morale of the group. When there are stones of stumbling, stumbling blocks in the road, when there are situations that are not dealt with by the leadership, then morale tends to sink. Where there are situations that need to be handled and those who are being affected by it find that the leadership do nothing about it or nothing seems to happen and the thing's there for week and month and nothing done, morale goes down.

Well, here he says it's the responsibility of the leadership to remove stumbling blocks wherever possible, take them out of the road, don't allow things to drift. When something requires attention, let it be done quickly. If a person is delinquent, then let it be dealt, let the matter be dealt with quickly and not let the situation deteriorate.

Of course, everything and everyone who has to be dealt with has to be dealt with in love. That's taken for granted. It's to be done in love and in consideration.

But I don't believe that we should sacrifice the work of God merely for the sake of maintaining peace. The work of God is more important than any individual worker. It's more important than me.

The work of God is the important thing. I think we have to remember that in our leadership. It won't make us hard, but it will make us realize that we have a responsibility to God first, and to our fellow members next.

Then the fourth one, the fourth one was to oil the wheels when they are sticking. This has to do with personnel relationships. Sometimes it needs a good lot of oil, doesn't it, when the wheels stick? When personnel relationships become abrasive, then is the time when we need the oil can.

The trouble is sometimes the temptation is to use the acid bottle, but it doesn't produce the effect. The importance of warm relationships in our work for God can't be overemphasized. Let us use the oil can.

The oil of the Holy Spirit, He is the wonderful lubricant in situations like that. People are far more important than administration. Some leaders love people, others love administration.

Ones who love people who are the true leaders. Administration has to be done, but the person who does the administration should remember that their administration affects people, and therefore people are more important. Then the fifth one, amend what is defective.

You think over your work, now what's lacking, or what's wrong in this situation? Is there something defective, something missing? What is it? All right, if you find that something is missing, you'll attend to it. This is problem solving, and that is one of the functions of a leader, isn't it? To solve problems. I came to the conclusion, after a rather heavy time, that 95% of missionary work is solving problems.

You think it over, it's an amazing thing. It isn't preaching the gospel that's the only problem. 95% of it is solving problems.

You've got the problems connected with the country in which you live, the politics of it. You've got your financial problems, you've got your personnel problems, you've got your language problems, all these things. You're surrounded by all kinds of problems, and the leader is the person who finally is responsible for solving those problems.

I remember seeing an advertisement, wanted, missionaries who will solve and not create problems. I said, that'd be good up here. Solving problems is a tremendously important thing.

And what have you been doing in a lot of your sessions during this time? Just that. You've been trying to solve problems. Here are problems that prevent our work from being as successful as it ought to be, or as we want it to be.

How can we improve it? How can we, what the solution is to this problem? And it's an exercise that is tremendously important, that the leader should realistically face up to the problem and follow it through until it's solved. That's his job. He's not to give up on it.

If there's a problem there, it's for him to see it, or her to see it, and to follow it through in dependence on the Spirit of God until you find the solution. And then in the last one, to supplement what is lacking. Sometimes there needs to be something added to the work, to supplement what is lacking.

This is creative planning. It's the creative planner that can see what's missing and that can see the possibilities and can raise our sights so that we can see new possibilities. Supplement what is lacking in the work.

Imaginative strategy and tactics to achieve the end we have in view. Now I think you'll agree that when Hudson Taylor made that very simple statement, he really got right to the heart of leadership, didn't he? These are the areas in which we're all involved. And if we can, in each of these places, even make some progress, we're really doing something.

We're really getting somewhere. Just a word about delegation. I don't intend to go into any detail, but there's one point that you probably know, but never mind, it'll be worth saying again.

The person who fails to delegate work properly condemns the operation to be a one-man show. It can never be any bigger than you are. If you don't delegate, you are condemning it to be a one-man show.

Jethro saw that with Moses. He said, Moses, if you go on as you're going, you'll be worn out and Israel will be leaderless. You have trained no leaders.

So he said, now you get 70 men, 70 qualified men, and you divide the responsibility. You stand between them for God. You take the important decisions and you delegate the others to these 70 men.

And he said, if you do this thing and the Lord commands you so, then you shall be able to endure. And what happened? If Moses had died then, Israel would have been leaderless. When Moses died, there were 70 experienced leaders plus Joshua.

Now, I believe that this is a thing of importance to us too. We need to, if we're going to really have followers, the delegation needs to be done and it needs to be done thoroughly. But, don't be unkind enough to delegate responsibility without giving with it commensurate authority to enable them to achieve what has been entrusted to them.

Now, most of us rather like holding on to a little bit of authority. But to delegate responsibility to somebody and then keep the reins in your own hands so that the authority is yours is not only unkind, it's selfish, it's frustrating. The other person feels they're not trusted.

And so if you delegate a job to somebody else, give them the full authority to see that job through to the end. And if you don't intend to give them the authority, then don't give them the work and the responsibility. Many of us are quite willing to get the other people to do the work, but we hang on to the reins, nothing doing.

True delegation gives with the responsibility also the authority. Now, during these days, what a tremendous spate of stuff you've had put over you, really. What are you going to do about it all? Any of

you felt a bit overwhelmed? Anybody of you felt how adequate I am? Well, some years ago, a good many years ago, I was going to one of our fields where the work was tremendously difficult, where the workers had had very little encouragement.

It was a Muslim field. And, oh, the going had been rough, and the missionaries were pretty discouraged, practically nothing to show for years of work. And I thought, I must have a message to take to them of encouragement.

But I'd been so pressed myself, I'd had not the slightest opportunity of thinking of a message. And I came just to the--I was to leave in the morning about half-past four to get a bus or something, and I went to bed fairly late at night, and not a message for them. I was really very burdened.

Well, I woke up about half-past two and leerily turned the light on. And I said, Lord, I must have a message for them. And I reached out, and I took a translation from my shelf.

It was one that's not very well known. It's by C.K. Williams, not the American Williams. This is an Englishman.

And I'd got this not long before. And my wife, when I got a new translation, she usually pinched it first and went through it and marked it. And I used to find her markings very interesting.

Well, I got this one, and it opened out. There it was, 2 Corinthians 4 and 5. And there were just four markings in it. They were, we do not lose heart, we do not lose heart, we do not lose heart, we do not lose heart.

Why didn't he lose heart? And immediately, I began to look through it and see what it was. And within a very short time, the Lord gave me something that was really very, very appropriate and very applicable. I'm sorry the time's gone, or I'd share it with you in detail.

But I'll give you at least one part of it. Because I think there are not many of us who don't have times occasionally when we get a bit down. Anybody ever had that experience? There's a verse that's very encouraging in 2 Corinthians 7 and 6. It says, God who comforts the depressed comforted us by the coming of Titus.

Here's dear old Paul. Paul getting depressed. That's helpful, isn't it? He wasn't exempt from even getting depressed in the midst of it all.

He wasn't exempt from fear. He said, I was with you in weakness. He's weak.

In fear, trembling, much trembling. He was a man very much like us. And so here, there are very few of us fortunate enough to escape periods of depression.

And it's so easy for us to lose heart. But in this passage, there are four different things he says as a reason why he doesn't lose heart. And the first one, you'll find in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 1. It says, therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.

Why didn't he lose heart? Because he was entrusted with a ministry. What ministry was it? Well, you read it in its context. And you'll find there the ministry it was.

The ministry of the new covenant. Well, what was the ministry of the new covenant? Why was the ministry of the new covenant given? For whom was it given? It was given for people who had utterly failed. Israel had failed God at every turn.

They'd broken the old covenant. So the Lord says, I'll give them a new one. And I think at this distance, it's almost impossible for us to realize the revolutionary nature of the new covenant as it must have come to those people.

They'd been under the oppression of the law, thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt, and the curses. And then this comes and it says, I will, I will, I will. I'll do this, I'll do that, I'll forgive your sins, I'll put my spirit within you, I'll write my law in your heart.

You know, it was so tremendously uplifting, so revolutionary. And Paul said, I've been entrusted with this ministry. I didn't deserve it.

I persecuted the church of God. I wasn't worthy. So he said, having this ministry by the mercy of God, I don't deserve it.

But here, this wonderful revolutionary message has been entrusted to me. No wonder I don't lose heart with this message. And so here is the wonder of it.

He was entrusted with a ministry, a promise, not only of divine help, but of divine enabling. You see, in the new covenant, there was the answer to every human failure. The Lord Jesus being the surety of the new covenant.

And so because of that, Paul says, we do not lose heart. I'll just mention the other ones and you can look it up at your leisure. The first one was, they were entrusted with a ministry.

And the second one was, they were endowed with new strength. Paul says, although our outer man perish, although it suffers wear and tear, yet our inner man is being renewed every day. So we don't lose heart.

It doesn't matter if the old body creaks and groans. It doesn't matter if it is wearing away. I'm being renewed in my inner man.

And I'm endowed with new strength every day. Why don't we take more of it? That's what it says. Then the next one is, in chapter five, the word isn't used.

It says, we faint not, I think. It isn't exactly the same word, but in the translation which I read, it was the same. They put it, we do not lose heart.

The third one is, they were endued with the Spirit. It says there, we have received the Spirit. And in that translation, it interpreted the earnest this way.

We have received the Spirit, part payment and promise of more. And there, what a wonderful thought that is. You know what an earnest is? An engagement ring is an earnest.

It's part payment, at least I hope he paid for it. But the point is that in an engagement ring, it's a promise of much more, a much closer fellowship to follow. It means that there is a wonderful relationship now, but there's something more wonderful afterwards.

And so what Paul is saying here, you've received the Spirit, you're the earnest of the Spirit, part payment now, but more to follow. In other words, any experience we've had of the Holy Spirit up till now is nothing to what there is ahead. There's always more to follow.

And then the last one, it speaks about they were engrossed with the eternal. We walk by faith and not by sight. The things that are seen, they are temporal, they're passing, but we're dealing with the things that are eternal.

And what does it matter if there is a weight, there is a burden for us? That's why it's a light thing, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory is being stored up for us. So here were these four things. They were entrusted with the ministry of the new covenant.

They were being endowed with new strength every day. They were endued with the Spirit, with the promise of more to follow. And they were engrossed with the eternal, they're walking by faith and not by sight.

And it didn't matter if their bodies were, if they died, why? There was this wonderful reward awaiting them in heaven. And so Paul says, we don't lose heart. So as you go back to your task again, these things are true for you.

You may be tempted to lose heart, the adversary will do his best, but there's no need to. We do not lose heart. And as that very early morning, when I was going through it, I thought, yes, but you know, Paul, he was Paul, I'm not Paul.

No, I thought, well, was he having an especially easy time? And I went right through that epistle very quickly. There's no time to do that, but I just read this one. This is what he said.

I'm talking like a madman. With far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, often near death. Five times I've received at the hands of the Jews, the 40 lashes less one.

Three times I've been beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I've been shipwrecked.

A night and a day I've been adrift at sea, on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren, in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure, and apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches, wherefore we never lose heart. I say, when we think of our little problems, my brothers, my sisters, and you come to this, and you'll find if you go back through this epistle, you'll find that in perhaps six or seven places he comes up with other things, in addition to this tiny little catalogue. And here's this wonderful man who says, in the midst of all this, I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.

I'm very glad he didn't say, I have always been content with my circumstances. He didn't say that. He said, I have learned.

That meant that he learned by the same process as we did. I'm sure that he rebelled against some of them too. But never mind, he got to the place where he says, I've learned, and now I can glory in my weaknesses.

So, my brothers, my sisters, we never need to lose heart.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11778.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-oswald-sanders/improving-leadership-effectiveness-ii/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net