

LIFE-GIVING LEADERSHIP

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Today's Treasure

Follow me, as I follow Christ

I Corinthians 11:1

I entered the national women's ministry leadership scene not as a leader but as the pianist. We finished leading the worship, and I found a seat at the back of the auditorium. It was 20 years ago, but I still remember the keynote speaker's words, "Women, where are your women?" I sheepishly looked around to see who she was talking about. Her exhortation challenged these leadership women to know and strategically invest in the women God sovereignly placed in their circles of influence. What I did not know that day was God sovereignly placed me there to be influenced by those women. Over the years I have followed many of the women in that room as they followed Christ. I was an unlikely leader that day and I still am. I did not know that by His grace, He would give me "my own women" to know, love, serve and invest in. In essence, this conference speaker was relating that life-giving leadership is about stewardship. **To be a steward is to cultivate and keep something of great value that has been entrusted.** Each day my goal as a leader is to steward the rich and robust truths I was entrusted with, starting that day in the auditorium.

Maybe you are like me and you don't consider yourself a leader, but I encourage you to look over your shoulder. You might have a 3-year-old, a corporate boardroom, a classroom of teenagers, or a women's ministry team following you. I have found there are many misconceptions about leadership. The word "leadership" is not synonymous with authority or decision making. It has little to do with a title or a role. Leadership, biblically speaking, looks radically different. It is upside down. It holds within it the potential to be life-giving or life-taking. **Biblical leadership is not positional leadership but rather servant leadership.**

Life-giving leadership is also a calling to follow and a promise to become like the One we follow. We hear the cry of leadership from Paul's mouth, "follow me, as I follow Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Sometimes we invite others to follow us. Follow our agenda, plans and purposes rather than Christ's purposes. The Oxford English dictionary defines leadership as "someone who goes before or alongside another to get them to an intended destination." This definition is good but it doesn't go far enough for the church. We glean much from leaders who have gone before us, "who shine like

the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness" (Daniel 12:3). More often, we are influenced by spiritual mothers and gospel friends who come alongside us as we do life together. These leaders fix their eyes on the destination: Heaven. They lead in light of eternity, investing in the only two things in life that last forever: the Word of God and the souls of men. They have the sacred privilege of participating with the Spirit as He prepares those in our circles of influence for eternity.

PRAYER

Father I confess that I often want others to follow me and not You. I want them to conform themselves to my agenda, plans and purposes. Replace these life-taking leadership tendencies with the life-giving cry from my lips, "Follow me as I follow Christ". Reveal self-sufficiency and selfish motivations in my heart. Lead on oh King Eternal and keep us following after You until we get Home.

