

## The foolishness of making leadership idols

Story of a young woman who had just started in ministry and idolized Benny Hinn. She would have all his books, cassettes, videos and if he was in the city she wouldn't miss going to his meetings to hear him speak. She spoke about him all the time. In short she had made Benny Hinn an idol in her life.

1 Corinthians 1: 10 – 17; 3: 1 – 23

### 1) Division – the consequence of making leadership idols

- The problems:
  - Quarreling
  - Jealousy
- The reason for these divisions
  - Each follows a different leader – “I follow Paul” “I follow Apollos”, “I follow Cephas”, “I follow Christ”.
- All these leaders were godly men who sought to expand the kingdom of God and not to build their own kingdom. Paul made that very clear – at least about himself.
- They weren't necessarily saying that they were literally following those leaders. They were following their teachings, methods and ways.
- All leaders have their own personalities, character traits and theological emphases. Some are more attractive than others but that doesn't make them better than others. Certain personalities are naturally attracted to a particular personality type – but that way of “choosing” your leadership is immature, worldly, acting as mere men.
- Various leadership characteristics of those who had preached in Corinth:
  - Paul: Probably the claim by his converts who were loyal to him.
  - Apollos: His eloquence probably appealed to the Greeks
  - Cephas (Peter): Possibly held in awe due to the fact that he was one of the twelve or, even more so, one of the three closest to Jesus.
  - I belong to Christ: This sounds spiritual. “We don't submit to human leadership we only submit to Christ” However the Bible tells us to submit ourselves to human leadership (Hebrews 13: 17)
- The problem is when we hold onto one person or type we can be led astray. God has given us a diversity of leadership to bring about His whole counsel to the whole church

### 2) The unity and diversity of God's servants

- Leaders are “only servants ... as the Lord has assigned to each his task” (3: 5)
- We ought not to elevate any particular leader but see each as merely doing what God has assigned them to do.
- It is when we listen to a diversity of leaders – all with the same purpose to build the kingdom of God and not their own kingdoms – that we see things from different perspectives and get a more godly view of spiritual matters.
- Different types of leaders aren't working against each other but compliment one another - “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”
- “We are fellow workers” (3: 9)
- It is therefore good to listen to different preachers and teachers even from other evangelical denominations. They often bring a perspective that we don't normally see. This is imperative to have our thinking and faith stretched.
- Leadership types:
  - The charismatic visionary. Always looks beyond the horizon stretching the vision of the church. However never builds depth into the church.
  - The staid teacher. Teaches truth and builds depth but does not easily motivate and mobilise the church into action.
  - The direct prophet. Speak truth directly and straightforwardly into the church i.e.

Confronts the church on issues. Is needed to keep a church practically on track with the Word of God but often lacks sensitivity to people's personal needs.

- The administrative leader. Keeps the church functioning in practical ways. Doesn't always give much spiritual input.
- (The above list isn't exhaustive)

### 3) Building wisely together

- A wise contractor knows that he has to hire various types of people to build a building. He hires someone to lay the foundations, a mason to build the walls, a carpenter to make and fit the windows and doors, a tiler to tile the roof. One type of person normally can't do it all. If they can then they're the exception.
- If we only follow the person who lays the foundations we won't build further than the foundations.
- God takes churches through seasons of various types of leadership and preachers according to what he wants to build into that particular church. In other words we ought not to look at the preachers and leaders but at what God is doing in our midst and why he brings certain leadership and message emphases to us.
- Maturity desires the holistic building up of the church seeing the church through God's eyes as he brings people to us and as we raise leaders from within our midst that will build wisely with quality as expert builders.
- Running after one particular leader to the point that we will quarrel over it and divide the church is destroying God's temple and God will destroy him who destroys his temple. (3: 16 – 17)

Let us be mature in seeing things from other perspectives other than the one we normally take.

1 Corinthians 3: 18 (The Message) “Don't fool yourself. Don't think that you can be wise merely by being up-to-date with the times. Be God's fool – that's the path to true wisdom. What the world calls smart, God calls stupid.”