

Preparing My Heart for the New Year

In leadership we must be wedded to a gentle and humble spirit. The present church needs no more power-hungry, attention-grabbing, insecure leaders who turn every conversation into inflating their own egos. Where have some of these guys come from? They have ways of setting themselves up in such subtle ways that people get caught up in their fan clubs before they realize it. They have ways of asking questions to get their egos stroked and feed their fragile sense of worth. I know where this stuff comes from; I have been there myself. *Prayerlessness!*

Leadership Corner

WITH MEL SHETLER

Leaders who are full of themselves are empty of meaningful times with God

There are many more of us who need to acknowledge with Agur when he wrote, "Surely I am too stupid to be a man. I have not the understanding of a man. I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One." (Proverbs 30:2-3, RSV) My prayers are starting to sound more like Agur's. "Lord, I am completely empty unless you fill me; I am so helpless without your guidance; I am broken and can't go on without your healing; I am clueless without your wisdom; apart from you I am nothing." The neat thing about Agur is that he had an honest assessment of his own weakness. May God help more of us to fall on our knees and see how bankrupt we are in our leadership without Him. We need to come to complete poverty of our own personal identity and title (pastor) to cast all our achievements down at His feet to embrace His eternal greatness!

Leaders who seek self-glory live far below God's glory

Do you wake up each day and realize that your example of leadership is so far below God's glory? Ezekiel witnessed the glory of God departing the place of worship in his day. Leaders kept leading worship without God's glory being present. When Jesus died on the cross God used the occasion to expose to everyone that the glory had departed from His place of worship. The curtain was rent from top to bottom opening the view to the most Holy Place. Sure enough, the glory

had departed! Every time we seek glory in our subtle ways of soliciting praise and affirmation from our people, we curtain out a little more of God's glory. I find myself so earthbound in my perspectives that I struggle to live in the dimension of glory in which Jesus lives. I think it is safe to say about all of us, that apart from God's grace we are constantly falling short of the excellence of God's glory.

Leaders who are desperate never give in to an independent spirit

No matter what our personality type is, no matter what our gift mix may be, desperation will turn us into different persons. When personal survival is at stake, we begin to seek Jesus in a different way. No price tag is too high! A drowning leader has only one thing in mind—how to get air. I invite you to pray a dangerous prayer with me for the New Year, "Lord, make me a desperate leader for You!" The past couple of years I have faced insurmountable obstacles in the leading of our church. We have a great pastoral staff and a wonderful support team of office help. We have elders that will tackle any situation that we may face and stand with us pastors through it all. None of this is my issue. My issue is that I get easily distracted by everyday demands, good demands like how to grow a church and be more effective in discipling new believers. My need is to seek God with the kind of desperation that causes the powerful spiritual winds to blow, the kind that set off a storm where things begin to change on the inside of me in an unprecedented rate. Oh, I have had tastes of what that is like, and I know what it takes. It is found in a deep resolve that when interruptions threaten my daily appointment with Jesus I say, "If you don't get out of my way I am going to run right over you because I have **got** to get in touch with Jesus!" **BB**

