

Kingdom News

Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever... (Matt. 6:13)

Volume 1, Issue 11

November 2007

Three (3) Strikes ... He's Out!!

In business, sometimes, companies fail because they do not know what their competition is doing. In sports, sometimes, teams lose because they misjudge their opponent's strengths. And in life (especially the life of a Christian), sometimes, we find ourselves engaged in acts of sin; because we misjudge our adversary. I will share with you what I have learned over the years; from scripture, revelation and experience. Perhaps it will be useful to you. This knowledge has been to me like a ruler, or square, in the hands of an architect. Here is what I have learned.

Everything in the world's system (or the kingdom of darkness) which has a tendency to draw our hearts away from allegiance to God, resolve themselves into one of these three things. They'll either have a relationship (directly or indirectly) to the passions and appetites of the flesh (that being the body and/or the soul); or to some visual enticement or stimulation; or to power or self-sufficiency. The scriptures teach us to "Love not the world; neither the things that are in the world. All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." (1 John 2:15-16 KJV by reference)

When we make these objects our primary goal or focus, we put them in the place of God (very dangerous ...

Three Strikes ...

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The Leadership Corner *Leadership Living, Inc.*

Perseverance is a Leadership Tool

It's strange how I tend to take any topic and say "it's a leadership tool." But, it's true. We can tie every situation to leadership because if we believe we are called to be leaders (and we are) we can and should utilize every situation to exhibit leadership.

As one of the Vice Presidents at the company where I work, I have an Administrative Assistant (AA). I've worked at this company a little over a year and a half. I realized shortly after I came to my department that the AA position needed to be converted or upgraded due to the volume and complexity of the duties.

In October 2006 I submitted a request to my CEO to upgrade the AA position to an Assistant Auditor position, but was denied. So, I hired an AA (the prior AA had received her bachelors degree and left the company for a professional position). The AA I hired performed to the extent of her capacity, but was unable to handle all of the job duties. As a result, I had to release her. Before doing so, I did some networking on her behalf to set her up with other job opportunities. I then decided to resubmit my request to upgrade the position. It had been a year since my first request had been denied. This time I felt sure my request would be approved; instead of requesting that the new position be an Assistant Auditor, I simply requested a senior AA position.

As protocol dictated, I spoke with the HR department and the General Counsel prior to submitting my request to the CEO, and they were in agreement. Well, I was disheartened to receive my request back from the CEO "denied" again. This time she wrote a note saying "these duties are higher level duties than what an AA should do." Of course I knew that, but since she'd denied my original request to upgrade to an Assistant Auditor, I'd tried to stay closer to the AA job

description.

With this second denial, it was tempting to just throw in the towel and try to find another AA who could do some of the duties. I would have to determine which vital projects simply could not be done. However, I felt the need to persist. I believed that this position must change, and now would be the time to do it. Therefore, being the student of effective leadership that I am, I requested a face-to-face meeting with my CEO. She granted the meeting and I had the General Counsel accompany me. I prayed and received direction from the Lord; put together a brief presentation of the direction I was trying to take the department in; and an illustration of why this new direction required skills above those of a traditional AA position.

While we were in that 40-minute meeting, the CEO insisted that all VP's have the same level of AA; and that my needs were no different than those of my peers. There was no reason why I should not be able to accomplish my goals with the current AA position. She then pulled out the company's salary guide to prove her point. Then, much to her surprise she understood exactly my dilemma. My office had been assigned an AA, while other VP's had Senior AA's.

The CEO remembered (and shared with me) that my position was formerly a Directorship (Directors have AA's). A few years ago she'd upgraded the position to a VP (before I came aboard); but HR failed to upgrade the AA title to a Senior AA position. That was the answer! With that discovery, she immediately granted my request to upgrade to a Senior AA. Hallelujah!

The CEO went on to say that she plans to conduct more research on this topic. She'd heard others complain about the layout of various positions in other departments. Our conversation led her to believe that other managers may be facing similar situations. She appreciated my persistence and the light it shed on a potentially company-wide labor problem.

Now you see why I say perseverance is a leadership skill? Because I was willing to persevere, not only did I accomplish my goal of upgrading the AA position in my department (after not one, but two denials); but this incident also helped discover a much larger organizational issue. In closing, I encourage every one of you...don't be afraid to be persistent. God may want to use you to accomplish a goal greater than the one you can intend.

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and, unfortunately, very common). We place them in a position to draw our affection and attention away from God. While this may sound a bit restrictive, initially; will you humor me a bit?

For all of the enemy's effort to deceive/destroy us; he only has three pitches. The more we know about them, the more we can see the value of submitting ourselves to God for guidance; thereby, avoiding these entanglements. Let's look at two places where this principle is expanded. Before we explore these events; let's recognize the timing of these events. One event took place in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2 and 3); at the beginning of the life of the first Adam. The second event, took place in the wilderness (Matthew 4) at the beginning of the ministerial life of the "last Adam" Jesus (1 Cor. 15:45 by reference).

In Genesis, during a discussion between Eve and the serpent (enemy); he enticed her with what appeared to be an opportunity to be as wise as God (the pride of life). First the serpent called God a liar; he told Eve that God was not being honest with them. The enemy said that God was hiding something, of value, from them; and that they would not surely die if they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He lead her to believe that having the knowledge of good and evil would make them as wise as God. Implying that once they were as wise as God, they would no longer need Him; they could then "make their own way in the world." They would not have to "sit around and wait for God to dole out His favor.

The scriptures (Genesis 3:6 KJV by reference) go on to say that "...when the woman saw that the tree was ... good for food (lust of the flesh); ...pleasant to the eye (lust of the eyes); and desirable to make one wise (pride of life)... she made a conscience choice to disobey God."

Okay, let's pause here for just a moment. I'm sensing that this time when Eve looked at the tree of knowledge of good and evil; she "saw" something, about that tree, that she had never recognized before. Notice now, this is not the first time she saw this tree. It didn't just spring up out of the ground; it had been there. It was there before she got there, okay. It's not like the tree was in a part of town that she didn't traffic in. It was smack in the middle of the garden; she was very familiar with it. She knew immediately that they had been given a commandment not to, so much as, touch it. Why then (pray tell) does this tree look differently

to her now?

Let me give you a hint. Before Eve’s conversation with the serpent, the tree of knowledge of good and evil held no special attraction to her. She knew it was off-limits. God had given the commandment; therefore, her heart was set against it. Her confidence was in the spoken word of God; she had no reason to doubt Him. This is important to notice, because when our hearts have confidence in God, in what He says; it has an amazing control over our appetites, or passions. It becomes easier for us to obey God. When you children trust you, it is natural and effortless to obey. This is a law of our natures. I’ll challenge you here, if you find it difficult to obey God in certain areas of your life, I’ll guarantee you that if you look close enough, you’ll find that you heart does not safely trust in God. I know... I know we want to believe that we love God and we would obey Him, but the lusts of the flesh ... but the lusts of the eyes ... are so overwhelming that we have no choice but to concede to them. To this I’ll say, not so. In every area of our lives where we dishonor or disobey God, we have either embraced some opposing opinion about what God has said. Or we lack confidence in God and his Word, which will naturally govern our desires and appetites. Search a thousand years, and I promise you’ll find this to be the case. Okay, back to Eve.

Eve knew that God had said, “... in the day you eat of the tree, you shall surely die...”so it was. (Gen 2:17 KJV paraphrased) The subject was not open for discussion; the topic was not debatable. It stood as

Words of Wisdom from My Mentor

Charles G. Finney (1792 -1875)



Another condition of governing the tongue is a sense of Divine presence. Let a man set God always before him, and realize that he is speaking in the presence of God and he will bridle his tongue.



Excerpt from *The Oberlin Evangelist* (Jan. 29, 1845)
Sermon – Governing the Tongue (ref. James 1:26)

www.charlesgfinney.com/1845OE/451105_victory_faith.htm For authenticity verification compare to original at www.GospelTruth.com Copyright© 1999, 2000

stated. God said, “Stay ... away ... from ... the ... apples.” Eve said, “No problem, I think I’ll have an orange.” And so there remained peace and harmony, between God and man ... until that fateful day.

The fifty million dollar question is “What changed?” Why, all of a sudden, did Eve have this unusually strong attraction to the forbidden? I’ll tell you why; but first let me say this. Don’t let anyone tell you that there was anything strikingly different between the tree of knowledge of good and evil and any other, fruit bearing, tree in the garden. They were all essentially the same, in that every tree in the garden was pleasant to the sight and good for food. (Gen. 2: 9 KJV by reference)

That being said, let’s revisit what happen, that day, that changed Eve’s (and our) relationship with the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Let’s get a snapshot of the “before and after.”

✚ Before (the conversation with the serpent); the tree of knowledge of good and evil was off-limits; it is likely that Adam and Eve had no appetite, no attraction, and no curiosity whatsoever regarding that tree. One reason I assume this is because prior to Eve’s distraction, the word of God was their governor. What God said was “law.” Their hearts safely trusted Him. Additionally the book of James (1:13 KJV by reference) teaches us that God can neither be tempted with evil, nor does He tempt us. In my mind it is a safe assumption that they lived quite some time, in the Garden of Eden, without any temptations to violate the commandment of God. Wow, can you imagine what our lives would be like if we didn’t yield to temptations to violate the commands of God?

✚ After, (the conversation with the serpent); the tree of knowledge of good and evil all of a sudden seemed to hold some great power ... some intense attraction. All of a sudden there was something to be desired that, seemingly, God had not provided for them.

Okay, perhaps that was a long way around the subject; let’s get back to what happen during that conversation with the serpent.

✚ The Lord said, “...in the day that you eat

thereof, you shall surely die.” (Gen. 2: 17 KJV paraphrased).

✚ The serpent said, “...you shall not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4 KJV paraphrased).

Eve had a choice to make. And you have a choice to make. Listen very carefully, because this is the same choice we will have to make every...single...day...of our lives.

There are essentially ONLY two responses to a confrontation like this: 1) to categorically trust what God has said; or 2) to question and/or doubt the integrity of what God has said. In my eyes, it is not even an issue of whether or not Eve believed what the serpent had said. What the enemy says, doesn't amount to a “hill of beans,” ever. What matters (from here throughout all of eternity)...what will always matter is the degree of confidence we place in what God has said ... period. We'll either believe Him or we won't. There is no middle ground; no fudge factor.

Eve listened to what the serpent said (first mistake). She then, having been tricked into questioning the integrity of God, looks at the tree of knowledge of good and evil; with an “awakened” desire. She saw the tree as being “good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise.” (Gen 3:6 KJV paraphrased)

Sidebar: Know this, that when we cast doubt on the integrity of God, the desires of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life; all become activated. They immediately begin to draw the heart farther away from God.

There was nothing, intrinsically, wrong with Eve's desire for food, attraction to visual beauty or desire for wisdom. The infraction occurred at the point where Eve, 1) questioned God's integrity and 2) sought to gain these things apart from God. It is amazing what we “think” we see and know; when we turn our eyes away from God. The Lord had already provided many, many trees that were good for food and visually attractive to the eye. And if Eve wanted wisdom, she could have asked God for wisdom (James 1:5 KJV by reference). It was always available, for the asking. Solomon knew this (2 Chron. 1: 7, 10 KJV by reference), when given an opportunity to ask God for “anything;” Solomon asked for wisdom and knowledge. I referenced this event; to show that in the history of mankind, when someone asked God for wisdom, they got it (and often without a great deal of bloodshed). In fact, God had already made wisdom

available in the tree of life, which was also in the middle of the garden. Eve “sought” wisdom, but she didn't ask God; she thought that she could get it from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The second event took place in the wilderness, just as Jesus began his ministry. Again the enemy shows up (Matt. 4:1-11 KJV by reference). The enemy suggests that Jesus could turn stones into bread (lust of the flesh); strike one. Next he suggested that the angels would not dare let Jesus die or be hurt, if he threw himself off a cliff (pride of life), strike two. Lastly, the enemy showed Jesus all of the kingdoms of the world and offered to give them to Jesus (lust of the eyes), strike three. After three failed attempts the enemy leaves.

Jesus showed us exactly how we are to behave when faced with events that tend to draw our hearts from obedience to God.

Sidebar: When we believe and obey the Word of God (spoken or written); it has the most awesome affect on our appetites and passions (the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life).

Remember the enemy only has three pitches; don't swing at any of them. Recall what God has said, and have confidence in Him. You will see, first hand, how powerful is the Word of God with regards to reigning in our desires (Heb. 4:12 KJV by reference).

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A Journey to Intimacy

Getting to Know Him

The Journey Continues

Temptation: About October 9, 2007, while in the office, I was having a conversation with one of my leaders. He was trying to explain to me a process, in an area of specialization with which I was *very* intimately familiar.

In my mind I thought “Are ... you ... serious?” You're going to teach me about something that I deal with every day? But out of my mouth I said, “I already know that.” He said, “Is this how you're going to be?” I said,

“(pause) ... I’m listening, but you’re trying to teach me something I already know.” This is the world that I live in.” He said, “But I’m not finished.” I said, “... go ahead, I’m listening.” He goes on. The conversation goes on and it ended very favorably; there having been a great exchange of information.

So that evening I’m reading C.G Finney’s discourse on the Blessings of Enduring Temptation and I find myself, ouch. I see that one of the things that tests do for us; is they serve as a vehicle to discover our self-righteousness. Then in my ear, I heard the voice of a person who had worked for me; say, “I already know that.” This was a favorite phrase of theirs; whether or not they actually understood the topic or not. I used to hate to hear them say that because; I knew that they didn’t understand what was being discussed. They just wanted to appear more knowledgeable and self-sufficient than they really were. But don’t we all at one time or another find ourselves there?

Fast-forward to October 9, 2007, I had done to my leader, the very same thing I didn’t like another person doing to me. (Enter a plea of “Guilty.”)

So this event/test discovered to me what was buried in my heart. How else would I have known this without this type of test?

With this, I begin to see the purpose of tests and trials in our lives. They bring us into situations where we have an opportunity to see whether we’re either aligned or misaligned with the principles of the kingdom.

Tests/trials serve to:

- ✚ Discover our attitude/disposition to be self-sufficient.
- ✚ Discover our attitude/disposition to be self-righteous.
- ✚ Teach us that we really do need God.

If we allow them, tests and trials can be great teachers. They are designed, by God, to show us our true character. And as we discover those things within us, that are not honorable to God, we repent of them. We ask the Lord’s forgiveness and grace.

As we notice these things about ourselves, we can engage an “exchange” with Christ. We surrender to Him our self-righteousness and we receive His righteousness. We give up our attitude/predisposition to be self-sufficient and we find our sufficiency in Him. I’ll share with you one of my conversations where an “exchange” took

place. “Father, I don’t know if I’m doing this right or not. But these past few series of events have discovered to me that I’m far too temperamental. I get angry and upset, sometimes, at the least provocation. I don’t like that. I understand from the scriptures that You will give us a peace that defies understanding. I want that, I really need that peace. I relinquish to You, my fragile and volatile temperament and ask instead for Your peace. I ask this in Jesus’ name. (John 14:13-14 and Matt. 7:7) I must be sure to ask in Jesus’ name, because there are expressed promises attached to asking a request in Jesus’ name. (John 15:16 KJV by reference) His name is like a “postage stamp” in the kingdom.

Part of the reason we don’t benefit from our tests, is because we focus on the test itself or what I like to call “the test facilitator;” and not on the purpose of the test.

Example: You’re on the road, along with a couple hundred other vehicles. I believe they call that “rush hour.” Now there’s an oxy-moron, for you. “Rush hour” softly defined as the period of time where the streets and highways become gridlock. We ought to call it the “trying of our faith that works patience.” During these times we can get frustrated and pressed to our limit. Don’t let someone ease in front of you, driving -10mph. That’s when you revert to sign language.

Okay ... okay so you get the point.

Is it possible that the intent of this ritual is so that the Lord can get you alone (for those of you who don’t carpool); to engage in some intimate discourse, with Him? Instead, we’re focused on the test (rush hour) or the facilitator (that other driver).

Is it possible that this ritual is intended to discover that we somehow feel as if we have more “road rights” than the other drivers? “It’s okay for us to get in front of them, because we actually have somewhere to go.”

Is it possible that we are here given manifold opportunities to extend grace; even though there are those who are clearly undeserving? After all, isn’t that what God did for us? So now, we daily have an opportunity to be like Him, in this respect.

Back to October 9, 2007; I had to repent for being impatient and self-righteous in my behavior and my disposition. I realized that in that brief moment I dishonored God, quite unintentionally, but I dishonored Him, nevertheless.

