July 1 – Change

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build . . ." Ecclesiastes 3:1-3.

This well-known passage from Ecclesiastes reminds readers that life is full of activities and events that are diametrically opposed to one another. Being born and dying are at opposite ends of the life spectrum and involve a series of changes leading from one to the other. The transitions can be traumatic, however, and each change in these verses represents an end or a new beginning. Leaders must help followers deal with change and sometimes that change is terminal - the end of a product, service or staff position. When something ends, it doesn't indicate that someone made a mistake; it is simply part of the cycle of life and death, beginning and end.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** If you are like most leaders, you love “life” but avoid “death” - you embrace the new but dread ending something that has been an important part of so many lives. You may even be avoiding the termination of someone on your team whom you love, but whose time to end his or her current position has come. Your Step today is to face the fact that there is a time for everything and to initiate that change with courage and resolve, even though you know it will cause pain.

July 2 – People Skills

"Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him" - John 13:3-5.

Jesus' relationship with His followers was not simply to teach them or to build a ministry network of workers. He was their boss or “Lord,” friend and mentor. To break down any barriers between them, Jesus stripped Himself of any pretense (along with most of His clothing), took a bowl and towel and washed their feet. This practical act of service was to rinse away the dust that gathered from walking through life. No one in that group wanted to perform this act except Jesus, who was the leader. Leaders must work to build close relationships with their followers, and that means treating them like real people with real needs and not just workers to get the job accomplished.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to check out the “feet” of those among whom you are called to lead, work or live. When you see their feet, use your leadership power to wash and refresh them where they are with what they need. For one, maybe it’s an extra day or two off. For another, it may be some time off to do school work, or some praise or recognition. For yet another, they would like to spend some time with you, going to a conference or trade show, or help in finding a new and better job.

July 3 – Purpose

"About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads’" - Acts 26:13-14.
In today's passage, the Apostle Paul was standing before the king and other Roman officials describing his encounter with the Lord on the Damascus Road. That encounter launched his ministry to the Gentiles, which was the foundation for his leadership in the early and modern church. Notice the clarity with which Paul spoke about something that had happened decades ago. A leader's leadership should emanate from his or her call or purpose, and that purpose should be easy for any leader to explain and for others to understand. Without purpose, leaders are simply “hired guns,” doing a job for money and benefits, often without passion and creative energy.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Do you know your purpose? Can you describe it in one simple sentence or brief explanation? Are you fulfilling your purpose in your current leadership role? Your Step today is to take the purpose assessment found at www.purposequest.com. The assessment is made up of 20 statements to which you will respond and receive back an evaluation of where you are in your quest for purpose. The follow up will have advice to help you be more purposeful.

July 4 – Goals

“David had said, 'Whoever leads the attack on the Jebusites will become commander-in-chief.' Joab son of Zeruiah went up first, and so he received the command” - 1 Chronicles 11:6.

David offered a reward to help him accomplish his goal of conquering Jerusalem. Joab's goal was to lead the army, so his personal goal fit perfectly into David's bigger goal. Leaders must be clear on what goals the group, department or company are pursuing. Then the rewards must reinforce those goals, and the rewards must help motivate people to action. All corporate goals should offer a reward that someone wants and not an ultimatum that they must achieve the goals “or else.”

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to examine the rewards system you have in place. First, do those rewards communicate what is most important to you and the company? Second, do the rewards provide a clear and desired incentive to those involved? Third, are your goals clearly communicated to those working to achieve them? The easiest way to discover the answers is to ask those involved to evaluate your goals for clarity and your rewards for relevance.

July 5 – Organization

"We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard” - Acts 27:18.

When Paul's ship was heading to Rome, it encountered a terrible storm for many days. It became so bad that the ship had to jettison its cargo to be more nimble and maneuverable in the storm. There is a leadership lesson in that story, for leaders and their organizations often become too “heavy” and weighed down with rules, procedures and middle managers. Then when a 'storm' hits - an economic downturn, unexpected setback, new competitors, or a career change - they find it hard to compete under the new conditions. This often requires a re-organization, restructuring or a downsizing to restore the flexibility needed to navigate through stormy waters.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Are you too “heavy” for the stormy waters you and your company are in? Then it's time to jettison some cargo! Your Step today is to create a change team that will look to reorganize your company or your personal world. This should include all aspects of your business, including personnel that may need to be released, and nothing is off limits. Your goal is not organization for its own sake or to reduce costs, but to become more nimble and capable of embracing current turbulent realities.

July 6 - Rest Stop 27
"Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines" - Leviticus 25:10-11.

Every fifty years, Israel took a year off from cultivating any crops, letting the ground go fallow. More importantly, mortgaged property was returned to its original owner and slaves were freed. The basic message of this jubilee year was freedom - freedom from debt, freedom from work, freedom from enslavement, freedom from bondage, freedom to serve the Lord. During that year, God reminded the people that He was their Source and Provider and that their main duty was not to make a living, but to serve Him. Leaders must also step back and realize that the work is not about them, or success or productivity.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Rest Stop today is to step away from work and ponder the fact that God is in control of your work situation and your life. Are you free in Christ from the pressures of life and work? Can you step away every now and then and get a fresh perspective on life and service? Are you addicted to work or can you withdraw for a while to see that your worth isn't dependent on what you do, but rather who you are? How can you celebrate a jubilee?

July 7 – Service

"The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" - Matthew 23:11-12.

Greatness is not only measured by what leaders do but also by what level of service they attain in what they do. Service is not being polite by holding doors open for people, although courtesy and manners are an important part of team building. Leadership service is using power to help others achieve their highest priorities and potential. In other words, leadership power exists to empower others, not to build a personality cult around the leader. When leaders serve and please God, He will exalt and honor them on His own and in His own timing, which may only be after they are gone from the scene.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is to assess, as you have done at other times since the beginning of the year, your impact as a servant on your team (or in your family). Give yourself a score of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) in the following areas: listening to others, knowing their goals and challenges, time for others, daily involvement in helping teammates and time spent teaching and training (giving away who you are and what you know). How can you improve?

July 8 – Motivation

"You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" - Hebrews 1:9.

This verse describes the key element of Jesus' leadership effectiveness and that element was joy. The writer of Hebrews later tells us the joy set before Him caused Jesus to do Jesus did what He did. He was not forced or compelled to do the Father's will, He willingly chose to do it because of His love for the Father. There are important leadership lessons here, for leaders must help create a culture where people can find and function in the role with duties that give them joy. If they cannot find something, then it is either created for them or they are assisted in finding it someplace else with grace and all the assistance they need.
LEADERSHIP STEP: Is joy a competitive advantage in your organization? Your Step today is to examine how joyful people are around you. Spend some time with your key staff and ask them whether or not they are happy. Find out what aspects of their current job give them the kind of joy that releases creativity, energy and enthusiasm. Then strategize how they can do those things more often. If they are not happy, then you will need to have a different conversation.

July 9 – Self Awareness

“Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me" - Job 19:21.

Job was in the midst of his trials and he turned to his friends for help. Their lack of compassion and harsh advice are legendary as an example of how not to comfort someone going through a tough time. They could not empathize with Job because they had not done the tough work of recognizing their own weakness and emotional neediness, so they could not possibly identify with someone else’s pain and sorrow. Leaders can learn to empathize with others only when they are in touch with their own shortcomings and humanity, and can be gracious to others when they learn and recognize that God has been gracious to them as well.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your awareness of others begins with your own self-awareness. Your Step today is to recognize your own emotional condition. This may seem awkward, but keep a journal today chronicling your emotional state for the day. If you feel fear, write it down and explain why. If you are happy, record that too along with what made you happy. Do the same with anger, surprise, joy and all other emotions along with the details of why they emerged. If you need more than one day, take it.

July 10 – Knowledge

“If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit. Your threshing will continue until grape harvest and the grape harvest will continue until planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land" - Leviticus 26:3-5.

God made these promises of abundant provision and successful business operations to all who know and obey His commands. It is good for leaders to remember that it is not their business smarts, their shrewdness or their negotiating skills that bring their enterprise success and prosperity. While all those things play a part, it is God's involvement, blessing and grace that ultimately make the difference, and He is to receive all the glory and praise. All leaders will be held accountable for whether or not they did business in accordance with God's word, so it behooves them to know the decrees and commands for which they are being held accountable.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Do you know what the Bible says about your business and your behavior in and toward that business? If not, it's time to increase your knowledge and find out! A good place to start is the book Proverbs. Start today and read a chapter of Proverbs every day (there are 31). As you do, pay attention to all the business behaviors, practices and advice that are contained therein. Take notes in your journal as you learn what will release God's business blessings as you obey.

July 11 – Wisdom

"God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon’s wisdom was
greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt” - 1 Kings 4:29-30.

While wisdom can come from experiences of both success and failure, it is also a divine gift. While there is a “wisdom of Egypt” that is relevant and pertinent, there is the wisdom of and from God that is superior to any other source. What's more, it is a gift that seems to vary in scope and topic from person to person, according to God's sovereign plan. Solomon's wisdom surpassed all his contemporaries and was “measureless.” If leaders are going to lead well, then they need to find people who are sources of this divine wisdom - gifted people doing what they are gifted to do. It is not enough that those people have the knowledge or skill in their area of expertise, but also have wisdom of how to apply that knowledge to the organization itself.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is to evaluate your current team for their wisdom - ability to apply their knowledge in their current setting with the team you now have. Once you have critiqued them, then establish a “wisdom team” and make them a member. You don't have to officially form or name that team; only you have to know that it is a group of people who seem to have insight beyond their years or work area that can help your department or business prosper.

July 12 – Influence

"Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.
Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, . . . " - 1 Timothy 3:1-2.

Leaders in the early church were to model the Christian behavior that made them leaders in the first place. In some sense, they were teaching through and by their lives so that followers could not only hear the truth being taught, but also see the truth being lived. Leaders cannot overestimate the importance of their posture as a role model, for followers will be quick to see when leaders talk the talk but don't walk the walk. When followers see that disconnect of action from words, they can become cynical and are encouraged themselves to behave in a careless and undisciplined manner, thus depriving the organization of their best work and creativity.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is to determine if you are walking your walk. Since you are the leader, it may be difficult to get accurate feedback since people fear possible retaliation. With that in mind, identify a 360-degree feedback tool (almost any HR department or online search can help you find one). Invest in having a 360 done and then study the results to see how people view you and what areas you need to improve to influence others through your behaviors.

July 13 - Rest Stop 28

"Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan" - Leviticus 25:10.

If a Jew had mortgaged or abandoned his family's land inheritance, he was to return to that land debt free in the year of jubilee. This was to preserve the family's ability to have the economic means to raise crops for generations to come, even if at some point the family's land inheritance had been mismanaged. There is some aspect of the Sabbath that was to focus on the family, for leaders are no good to their family if they are never home. What's more, if leaders so exhaust their resources at work that they have nothing left for their families, it is almost the same as them not present even though they are there.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Are you taking care of your “ground” so that it will last for generations? Today's Rest Stop is to consider your exercise habits. How is your weight? How are your eating habits? Do you exercise regularly?
Once you look at those health habits, take some time today to map out some goals and a plan for how you can improve. What is your ideal weight? How can you obtain and keep it? To get things started, why don’t you go for a walk right now?

July 14 – Power

“When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi” - Matthew 2:16.

The hallmark of authoritarian leaders is anger. They believe they own what they lead (sometimes they do) and they are infuriated when someone does something to their “baby.” This anger can be expressed verbally or in actions that let everyone know who is in charge and the consequences for failure or disobedience. What's more, in this verse we see that Herod did not have a succession plan, except that his sons would take over, but only upon his death. In some ways, authoritarian leaders believe they will live a long time, if not forever.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Today’s Leadership Step is for you to reflect on the role that power plays in your leadership role. You can measure that by your anger level. How angry do you get when people do “dumb” things or when they disappoint or fall short of your expectations? How do you express that anger? Do you show it and you don’t even know it? If your anger level is high, then ask God to show you the root source of your anger and determine to change your style.

July 15 – Persuasion

"We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away" - Hebrews 2:1.

Everyone has a tendency not to pay attention when their mind wanders or zones out. That is why leaders need to be mindful of their need to communicate often and well. It is not how well leaders speak or write that is most important, but how well followers and listeners understand and retain what leaders say. Leaders should accept responsibility for making sure good communication occurs. That means leaders must say important things more than once, using different media to say it, and must work to help listeners pay attention and retain.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** How are you most effective at holding people’s attention? You cannot persuade them if they are not listening to or reading what you have to say. Your Step today is to establish feedback on all your communication that is accurate and meaningful. You can watch your numbers of readers if you write or blog, use surveys for feedback if you speak or teach, take questions whenever you communicate, or simply watch to see if people are doodling, sleeping or listening when you talk.

July 16 - Values

“Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long” - Matthew 23:5.

The Pharisees performed their religious rituals with one thing in mind: be noticed by other people. Their desire was to draw attention to themselves so people would honor them as leaders and consider them spiritual men. Jesus commented that they did everything to attract the attention of others. Leaders cannot get away from their values; what they consider important is what they will do every time. Authoritarian leaders are doing things for one reason, no matter what they do: to establish that they are in charge and worthy of the position.
**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Why do you do what you do as a leader? Is it to draw attention to yourself? Your Step today is to reflect on your motivation for leadership. Are you offended when people don’t treat you with the respect you think they should? Do you need the best office and parking space because you are the leader? Do you do the things you do to serve others or to promote yourself? It is important that you be honest with yourself concerning these answers.

July 17 - Ethics

> “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?” - Luke 16:10-12.

Jesus did not preach a complicated gospel. It was and is easy to understand - impossible to do without God's help, but not hard to grasp. In these verses, Jesus laid out three principles that make for good ethics: 1) be faithful in the little things; 2) be trustworthy in money matters; and 3) handle the possessions of others with integrity. The last of the three includes just not physical property of others, but also their reputation, gifts, future, time and career. In other words, the proper handling of people is not just a matter of efficiency but rather it is an ethical matter, along with the proper handling of money.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Do you see proper management of people as not just a management/leadership matter, but also an ethical one? Your Step today is to meditate on that truth and then assess your ethics where others are concerned. How many people are you mentoring? How many have you helped promote to other positions? Do you waste people's time by being chronically late? Do you use your power to empower others? Are you keeping someone in a position for which they are ill suited to protect yourself? What can you do to improve?

July 18 – Collaboration

> "Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, 'Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.' 'Do all that you have in mind,' his armor-bearer said. “Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul” - 1 Samuel 14:6-7.

Jonathan proposed a bold plan to attack the Philistines (something his father Saul with the army refused to do) and his armor-bearer agreed wholeheartedly to accompany him. Jonathan provided the leadership and his armor-bearer the followership and together they were able to create such a stir that eventually the army of Israel moved out of fear and attacked as well. Here we see that: 1) leaders provide adventure and purpose; 2) leaders need at least one follower to be a leader; 3) the armor-bearer also became a leader of Israel through his courageous followership; 4) courageous leaders and followers operate in faith; and 5) courageous followers encourage leaders to act on their leadership vision.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Are you creating enough exciting opportunities for people to express their followership? Today’s Step is to identify your followers and their reasons for following. Are they willingly following your vision or are they motivated by fear? Do they have faith or are they living off your faith? Can you speak to them and they respond with their own courage and vision? One other thing to consider: have you been a poor follower in your current position so that you are reaping what you have sown?

July 19 – Relationships
Jonathan and David had a close relationship through which they served and encouraged one another. Jonathan knew he was to be David's right-hand man in David's administration and David valued Jonathan's friendship above any other relationship. Unfortunately, Jonathan's premature death in battle prevented their friendship from maturing beyond what it was. Leaders must not fall into the flawed thinking that they do what they do in isolation. Rather, they should acknowledge their need for many others to help them do the work, and some to be close enough to serve as confidantes, comrades and friends.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your leadership is not threatened but rather enhanced by a core of close followers who are also friends. Your Step today is to sit down and make a list of your closest associates in any of the work you do, including family. Then take time to write a note or pay a personal visit to say, “Thank you,” for their help and support. Then use this list to pray for those people regularly. If your list is short, then you have work to do to build your network of relationships.

July 20 - Rest Stop 29

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Nehemiah saw that the people were burdened with grief and despair, and he ordered them to party as a nation. The day was “holy,” which simply meant God had set it apart for a special purpose (it was not a day to do nothing as some interpret a Sabbath to be; it was a day to cultivate and express joyful hearts). What's more, Nehemiah ordered them not to grieve but to do what they had to do to get in touch with and maintain their joy, which was the source of their strength. Leaders should work to maintain the joy in their own lives and then help others discover and nurture theirs, for joy is the secret energy source of all productive and healthy people.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** You can take time off from work, but if you don't have joy, you won't find the strength and rest you crave and need. Your Step today is to read my article Joy Inventory found in the Appendix and follow the process I describe for a week or even just a few days. Then look at your inventory list to see what it reveals to you. When was joy present in your heart? What were you doing? When did joy run away and hide? What does tell you about your work at this time?

July 21 – Emotional Intelligence

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At that point in his career, King David was pretty much out of the day-to-day operations of the kingdom. His staff was preoccupied with meeting his personal needs and that left a vacuum at the top of the nation, which Adonijah tried to fill through a political coup. David almost died before he installed Solomon as the rightful king. The point is that David inflicted much anxiety and angst upon his people by refusing to deal with his age and who would take over the throne, insisting that death was to be the only cause of his retirement. Leaders must realize that the nation, organization or company does not exist only to serve their needs and provide their comfort, but should do the same for as many in the entity as possible.
LEADERSHIP STEP: Are you training your successor? Your Step today is to recognize that you may be the source of pain and suffering in your organization through your refusal to delegate or plan for the future. Then you must develop a plan to identify your successor or at least to begin to train others in some of the functions you perform in your company. Just talking about your eventual departure will help people with that reality and give them less cause for concern.

July 22 – Coaching

"So the Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the Lord. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in" Numbers 27:18-21.

Joshua had served Moses and been close to him as Moses led Israel out of Egypt and through the Wilderness. Now it was time for Moses to help Israel make the transition to Joshua's leadership after Moses had ruled for 40 years. First, notice that Joshua had the spirit of leadership on him, so he was obviously God's choice to lead. Then Moses was to establish Joshua in front of the people so people could mentally and emotionally make the transition to a new leader. Finally, Joshua was to have access to the priest so he could make decisions with God's guidance and assistance. Leaders must pay attention to the issue of succession, making sure that their successor has everything he or she needs to do the job effectively and is known and accepted by the people.

LEADERSHIP STEP: No matter what position you have in your organization, you must realize that you will not have it forever. Some day you will have to turn it over to someone else - and you are not always aware of what day that will be! Your Step today is to make a decision to begin training one person (or a team of people) in what you do, or at least preparing a document outlining your job duties so that someone (or a team) can replace you when the time is right to do so.

July 23 – Attitude

"If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me" - 1 Corinthians 9:17.

When you replace preach with lead in today's verse, it can provide a new perspective on leadership. The age-old question of whether leaders are born or made is changed to whether or not leaders are called to lead. When leaders lead, they are fulfilling a mandate or assignment from the Lord, regardless of whether they head a Fortune 500 company or their garden club. In the context of this verse, leadership is its own reward - the knowledge of being used by God for a unique role and purpose. If nothing else, leadership is fulfilling a trust or stewardship that God assigns the leader to fulfill and complete. Thus leaders do not lead for what they can get - although there are rewards - but for what God has called and singled them out to do.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Are you leading voluntarily? Do you see your leadership role as a duty or a calling, or both? Today's Step is to examine your attitude toward your leadership, whether you are leading now or preparing to lead in the future. Are you protecting yourself from hurt or criticism by laying low or are you actively engaging opportunities to lead? Do you see your service to others as service to God, regardless of how they receive or treat you when you lead?

July 24 – Productivity
"Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox come abundant harvests. - Proverbs 14:4.

An ox is a big animal capable of working hard and moving heavy objects. While a valuable asset to have, the ox creates its own problems because it has to be fed and then creates a lot of manure. This verse is not about care for oxen, but rather teaches that leadership is sometimes a messy process. Leaders cannot always play it safe, keeping their world simple and their manger clean from all manure. At times, they must work with people and processes that, while complex or creating their own problems, bring tremendous opportunities for growth and innovation. Fear of risk or change can keep a company and its people stuck in a rut that can lead to serious problems down the road.

LEADERSHIP STEP: How prone are you to play it safe? Do you realize that deciding to do nothing, thus keeping your manger clean, is actually a decision that has serious implications? Your Step today is to ponder whether or not your aversion to risk is costing your organization future opportunities and growth. You can do this by listening to others who are less fearful of risk and carefully considering what they say, not only focusing on what can go wrong, but also on what can go right.

July 25 - Finances

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" - 1 Timothy 6:10.

Money is not the problem in the life of a company or an individual. It is the love of money that causes all kinds of problems. Leaders must first be aware of this personal danger for, if they do their job well, they will probably be rewarded financially. If their organization is successful, then the company will also have abundant financial resources. The only antidote for the love of money is generosity and giving, so leaders must develop this trait in their own lives and then help their companies develop a corporate sense of community service and generosity. This isn't just good business, this is a moral necessity!

LEADERSHIP STEP: Let's start today by examining your personal giving habits. Do you give your time, money, talent and expertise to other people and organizations? Do an audit of your organization's generosity, even if you are supported by the donations of others? Once you assess where you and your organization are, then your Leadership Step today is to determine how you, your family or your company can be more generous in to escape the love-of-money's evil and dangerous hold.

July 26 - Time Management

"Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, 'How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?' It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time" - Nehemiah 2:6.

Nehemiah set a time when he would be finished with the project of rebuilding the walls. He had never been to Jerusalem, did not really know much about building, and had no idea what he was going to find when he got there. How did he know how long it would take? He probably made his best guess, and it satisfied the royal couple. Leaders need to set time limits on what they set out to do, otherwise things may drag on and there is no urgency in the work being done either personally or corporately.

LEADERSHIP STEP: You may be facing a similar situation, but are hesitant about making a commitment to a specific time. Today's Step is to look at your most important projects and make your best guess, get to work and trust the Lord! Where are you holding back because you cannot be as precise as you would like? Where would making
your best guess as to the time it will take help you get started? Where can you have faith to get it done in even less
time than you estimate?

July 27 - Rest Stop 30

"Do not bring a load out of your houses
or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep
the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded
your ancestors" - Jeremiah 17:22.

Every other nation at the time of Jeremiah worked to survive. Israel was never to be like those nations, but was
rather to live for worship and God's service. That was represented by Israel taking a day off from work, a day that
was to be devoted to family, rest, worship and the acknowledgment that the Lord was their God. The Sabbath was
also a reminder to the Israelites that they were not to fit God into their work at their convenience but that He was
Lord of their work. Leaders would do well to remember that there is more to their lives (or should be more) than
simply work and production. They should also be mindful that they don't exist to work but the work exists to teach
them about God and to fulfill His purpose and plan.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Did you ever think that you don't exist to work but that the work exists to give something to
you? Your Step today is to reflect on these questions: what has your work given you (except money)? How has your
work enriched your life and deepened your walk and relationship with the Lord? What has your work taught you
about God and His purpose for you and the world? If you aren't happy with your answers, then reevaluate what you
do and why.

July 28 – Humility

"If anyone thinks they are something
when they are not, they deceive themselves" - Galatians 6:3.

Humility is not denying the truth of a person is, which is nothing more than false humility; it is that person having an
accurate assessment of who he or she is and what he or she can do. Thus pride is the opposite of humility because it
carries an inflated or exaggerated perspective and evaluation of one's importance or abilities. Leaders need an
appropriate humility, which not only includes admitting who they are not, but also recognizing and confessing who
they are and what gifts and strengths they can bring to a team. It never glorifies God for leaders to act or pretend like
they are nothing when God has gifted and called them to be a person of significance and influence.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is to determine if you suffer from false humility, which is denying who you
are and what you do well to appear to be humble. What do you do when someone compliments you? Do you deny
the truth of what they are saying, or do you simply say, "Thank you"? Can you admit that you are good at some
things without feeling guilty? Can you talk about your gifts without feeling self-conscious? If you answer yes, then
you have healthy humility.

July 29 – Decision Making

"He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble" - Luke 1:51-52.

God brings down rulers who have proud thoughts, because that thinking leads to proud decisions, which in turn
manifest proud actions. If there is one thing to which God reacts strongly and quickly, it is pride. God expects all
rulers or leaders - not just church leaders - to render just and righteous decisions. Therefore, leaders must take pains
and steps to ensure that their decisions are not based on ego, self, insecurity or greed, but rather are rooted in
humility - knowledge and admission that the leader has limitations and needs God's wisdom to succeed. Sometimes that wisdom will come through other people, which means that leaders must humble themselves and ask for help, thus causing them to follow rather than lead.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to assemble your team one-by-one or together in the coming days (this can include your family). When you are with them, ask, "If you were me, what is the one thing you would change about this organization?" Then also ask, "What do you think is the greatest opportunity for growth and development we have as an organization?" Then listen for common themes in what you hear and begin to make humble decisions with the input you obtain.

July 30 – Communication

"So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 'Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own'" - Joshua 1:10-11.

Joshua had to communicate to millions of followers and he did so by using others to communicate a clear and simple message: it’s time to move on, so get ready. It would follow that these followers not only knew Joshua, but also the officers who were communicating the message to them. They therefore knew the message could be trusted and was important, so all were on the same page, so to speak. Everyone knew to get ready for change. Leaders need to develop this same kind of communication network, a clear and simple message and messages that hold and captivate people’s attention.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Today’s Step is to consider and evaluate your communication network. Are you paying attention to its regular upkeep? Are you credible, consistent, and clear in your communications? Does your leadership team spread the word with the efficiency and urgency you require? Are your meetings all they can be as a communication tool? Of course, if you don’t have credibility as a leader, then people won’t pay attention no matter how regularly you talk.

July 31 – Spiritual Growth

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" - Galatians 6:9.

Leaders must seize every opportunity to do good deeds, no matter what business they are in. This includes not only in their personal lives, but also in their business or community lives as well. What's more, Paul encouraged the readers to endure in doing those good deeds, for there is always a season when it seems like the doing of good deeds receives no notice or has no reward. It may seem like God doesn't notice, but He has a big book and a sharp pencil, so to speak, and He never forgets or allows good deeds to go unrewarded.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Have you grown weary in doing good deeds? Does it seem like your deeds go unnoticed or unrequited? Your Step today is to encourage yourself and your organization (or your family) in your benevolent strategies. First of all, make sure your strategy is clear. Then identify the causes to which you are committed to give time and resources. Finally, communicate your work not to trumpet your good deeds but to benefit your cause(s) even further.

August 1 – Personal Development
"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them" - Joshua 1:6.

Since leaders are going to take people places they could not go without leadership, those leaders must prepare for the difficulties of the journey. One qualification or characteristic is strength, which includes mental, physical and emotional. The strength must be for a purpose, which of course is to reach a destination many thought impossible. Another is courage. Leaders cannot faint along the way, but must face the unknown and intimidation with resolve and wisdom, for sometimes those leaders need the courage to change course or admit mistakes.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to consider strength and courage and how they factor into your leadership effectiveness. Start with strength. Do you have the strength to say “no,” to be quiet and to persevere in the midst of difficulties? Then go on to courage. Can you reflect on personal examples of when you exhibited courage? Where might your courage be lacking now and what may it be costing your organization or your personal development?

August 2 - Rest Stop 31

"Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience" - Hebrews 4:11.

This verse indicates that it takes effort to enter the kind of rest that God has in mind for His people. It also teaches that disobedience is a source of unrest, as was shown by the Israelites who had to wander the wilderness due to their unbelief. A poor spiritual condition is a source of hardship and labor no matter how much leaders rest their physical body. Things like worry, lack of personal discipline, anger and greed can take away a leader’s strength and lead to fatigue, which if left unchanged, can cause serious health problems.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to determine your state of rest beyond your need for a day or two off from work. Do you ever say that you need a vacation? Are you tired when you get up even after a good night’s sleep? Do you rejoice when it’s your day off and dread the day when you have to return to work? Do you overeat or have other physical symptoms caused by anxiety? If your answer to any is yes, you need to make an effort to get to the root cause of your fatigue.

August 3 – Strategy

"Where there is no vision, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom’s instruction" - Proverbs 29:18.

This verse is regularly quoted to point out the importance of vision. Without vision, people tend to do whatever they think is best, without regard to how their actions fit into the overall picture. There is no vision because there is no clear, compelling picture being communicated by leadership. This verse goes on to explain that providing a vision is wisdom that will light the way forward. Leaders should always communicate a vision beyond what they know how to accomplish, for this “vision wisdom” will show up and provide the answers to the “how” questions that always result when vision is cast.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** We have discussed vision in previous entries, but let's pay another visit to this important concept. Your Step today is to take a look at the vision that is spelled out for your family, company or organization? Is it clear as to why you exist? What are you trying to accomplish? Someone once said that vision is where you are going and mission is how you will get there. Are both your vision and mission clear enough to guide the steps of those involved?

August 4 – Change
"But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day" - Joshua 6:25.

Rahab protected and saved the Israelite spies, and her reward was that her family’s lives were spared. She had to undergo massive changes, however, for she had to transfer cultures from where she had been to live with Israel in order to survive. What helped Rahab deal with the change was that her life was in danger. Leaders must help followers understand the need for and price of change when the stakes aren’t so high. While the need for change may not be as severe as it was for Rahab, adapting and accepting change is still an important part of survival at both an individual and corporate level.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to focus on a change that you need to institute at the corporate or family level. First, be clear on what change you seek. Second, determine what it will look like when the change is implemented. Third, decide how you will communicate both the need for the change and how the change is progressing. Finally, how will you know if you were successful?

August 5 – People Skills

"Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these'" - Matthew 19:13-14.

Jesus was always accessible and friendly (except to the religious bigots). People felt comfortable enough bringing their children to Him for a blessing, knowing He would not shun or avoid them. Yet Jesus' administrative assistants and ushers tried to keep the people away from Jesus, thinking they were acting in Jesus' best interests. Leaders are meant to be among the people and not over the people. They must not allow themselves to become isolated from either the people they serve or their needs, and must make sure their assistants and procedures reflect the values of openness and accessibility.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Today's Step is to examine the image your followers and team are portraying to the public. Are they keeping people and information from you that you need to see and know? Are they friendly in their encounters with others? One way you can find out is to ask around and perhaps even distribute a survey to a broader cross section of staff or public to get a clear picture of how they see your administrative “world.” Then take any necessary corrective action.

August 6 – Purpose

"On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised" - Galatians 2:7.

Paul's purpose was clear to those with whom he shared it, which means it first had to be clear to Paul. And Peter's was so clear to him that he was able to share it with Paul. Both men knew what they were created to do and therefore were able to clearly communicate it to others so they would know what to expect from those two leaders. This allowed both men to focus on their strengths and not interfere with each other's purpose. Leaders are people of purpose, not doing things just because they can do them, but because there are certain things they do that no one else can do - and that is and should be their main contribution to their team and organization.
LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is to hone your purpose statement to make sure it is clear to you, so you can make it clear to others. Start by taking the purpose assessment found at www.purposequest.com. Then follow through on the suggestions you will receive in a return email. You may also wish to do some additional study of Paul’s purpose, and an article to help you do that is also found on my website. Don’t stop seeking until your purpose is clear to you and others.

August 7 – Goals

"One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys" - Proverbs 18:9.

If a person was to build something and someone else destroyed it, it would be seen as a criminal act. Yet if someone does not build something that was possible to build, no one would see that as criminal although the end result is the same. In both cases, the world is deprived of something that had the potential to help or bless many. The point is this: A leader's inability to be productive robs the world of what he or she has in them that is unique, giving them something in common with one who would destroy what another built according to today's verse. There is nothing better suited to help a leader be productive than the goal-setting process.

LEADERSHIP STEP: It's time to get back on your goal-setting track. What is the world losing by your inactivity? Where are you excusing your slackness as “no big deal”? Where do you need a change of attitude to create more urgency and less slackness? Your Step today is to examine your usage and effectiveness of goals. Spend some time and set two or three goals in a few areas - physical, personal, business or financial - or revisit and reset goals you have abandoned.

August 8 – Organization

"Now if it pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to see if King Cyrus did in fact issue a decree to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem. Then let the king send us his decision in this matter" - Ezra 5:17.

All royalty has to pay attention to the organization and efficiency of their kingdom. Today's verse indicates Babylon had archives that were accessible and available for research. These archives had to have people overseeing them and some logical filing and storage method. Once the research was finished on the question at hand, the king then had to communicate his decision about the way forward quickly and efficiently - again calling for organizational efficiency. Leaders must pay attention to the matters of systems and structure so that their organizations can have access to past decisions and communicate present ones to those who need to know.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is to tend to the organizational capabilities of your company (or family). Do you have archives of photos and important documents? Where are they stored and how public are they? Then take a look at the communication efficiency of your team or company. Are you structured and disciplined enough to get important messages to those who need to know? Make sure you are modeling the organizational skill you desire others to have.

August 9 - Rest Stop 32

"For God does speak—now one way, now another—though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword" Job 33:14-18.
It seems that while people sleep, God is at work to speak to them through dreams. It is interesting that sleep is not simply a down time by God’s design. Rather it is a time when He can communicate with people when their conscious defenses are not active. The point here is that rest and sleep are not purely a cessation of activity, but rather a change of pace that God uses for His purposes. Leaders should use their rest not just to disengage from activity, but also to allow God to speak to them in ways they cannot avoid or prevent. What’s more, dreams often have content that is important for the recipient, so if God chooses to use rest to work in people’s lives, those people should expect to hear God during their rest time.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Leadership Step or Rest Stop is to use some down time to hear from the Lord. Have you had any recurring dreams? Perhaps God is speaking to you about some theme and you would do well to seek Him for some answers. Do you go to bed or into a season of rest thinking about a problem? Then perhaps you should have the faith that God will provide an answer when you sleep. Don’t see your rest as a cessation of work but a change of pace to a different kind of work.

August 10 – Service

"The one who guards a fig tree will eat its fruit, and whoever protects their master will be honored" - Proverbs 27:18.

Leaders often have many people serving them both personally and professionally. These people serve with distinction and are an important part of both the leader’s and organization’s success. Today’s verse indicates that they are worthy of honor. Leaders must remember that any success they enjoy is not due to their efforts exclusively but rather to the efforts of the team. Therefore, leaders should proactively and creatively honor those who serve them day-in, day-out with distinction and excellence.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to examine who in your world serves you well and is deserving of some special blessing or recognition. Make a list of everyone whom you need to recognize for outstanding service. Then be creative and think of personal and special ways to bless and honor them. Perhaps a personal note from you, a special gift, a small (or large) ceremony, something nice for their families, a group outing or simply some extra time off would be in order.

August 11 – Motivation

"Then the Lord said to Aaron, 'You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the tent of meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, so that you can distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean'" - Leviticus 10:8.

The Lord forbade the priests, who were the leaders in Israel, to partake of any alcoholic beverages before they went to work in the tent of meeting. This was not because the Lord was against alcohol, but rather so their judgment would not be impaired when they were dealing with spiritual things. In other words, they were to take their work seriously and be motivated by a desire to serve the Lord. Leaders must also be careful not to self-medicate themselves to get through the anxiety and pressures of work, which can take the form of many addictive substances like food, medicine, alcohol and almost any other activity that will help them escape their work rather than engage it.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to do an honest evaluation of your recent approach to work and your leadership role. If it is strictly for the money, then you may be a candidate for adopting lifestyles and habits that help you get through your workday because of boredom or anxiety. Are you exercising regularly? How is your weight? Are you engaging in any habit that helps you get through the day but prevents you from giving your best efforts at work?
August 12 – Self Awareness

"Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other" - Galatians 5:26.

Leaders are often in front of others because they are charismatic, dynamic, intelligent, visionary and skilled. They also enjoy some measure of success due to their strong ego drive to get things done, achieve and excel. A problem doesn't arise when leaders use their ego to get the job done. The problem comes in when leaders become egotistical, when they insist on getting the credit for everything, when they begin to “believe their own press clippings” that they are as good as others say they are. When that happens, leaders resent or envy anyone else's success and demand that they be the center of attention in all things.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your transition from ego to egocentric can be subtle but painful for those around you and dangerous for you. Your Step today is to take measures to keep this from happening: 1) surround yourself with people who will tell you the truth you need and not want to hear; 2) celebrate the success of others; 3) mentor others so they can excel and thrive; 4) serve others' needs; and 5) divest yourself of all privileges you get simply because you are the leader.

August 13 – Knowledge

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" - 2 Timothy 3:15-16.

The Bible is not a book about leadership but it contains many principles, stories and commands that would make any leader more effective. The Bible, however, is not to be approached lightly or without some understanding of how to interpret and apply its directives. Leaders would do well to study the Bible, not only in personal devotions, but also in some form of deeper, directed study that would aid in their ability to comprehend and incorporate what they learn into their everyday leadership style and decisions. Perhaps the Bible is best applied, however, in character formation, for this book written thousands of years ago can still interpret the motives and intent of a leader's heart with amazing accuracy.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is to recommit to a lifelong study of God's word, both from a devotional and academic perspective. First, make sure you choose a good translation and assign it as your study Bible. Second, read through the Bible in one year. Third, look for classes in your church or online that will enhance your understanding of Bible history, language, types of literature therein and authors. Finally, apply what you learn to your work.

August 14 – Wisdom

"God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt" - 1 Kings 4:29-30.

Apparently there were some people in the ancient world who made their living from and built a reputation on a special ability to obtain and dispense wisdom. The best of them all was Solomon, who God gave a gift of wisdom and understanding. There was a day when the world came to the church and its leaders for wisdom, teaching and insight. There was a day when great explorers, inventors and innovators came from the church, spurred on in their work by their faith. No matter how naturally gifted or intelligent leaders are, the best leaders still access supernatural wisdom to help them do the work God assigned them to do.
LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is a simple one. Solomon got his wisdom in response to his prayer for wisdom, which God was only too eager to answer. From this day forward, you will do the same thing: Ask for wisdom, according to James 1:6: "But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt." After you ask, you must actively listen and watch for God's responses, and quickly apply them to your situation. "Believe, ask, listen and watch, apply" is now to be your daily ritual.

August 15 – Influence

"Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, 'I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you'" - Joshua 2:8-9.

Rahab was the women speaking in this verse and she was hiding on her roof the men Joshua had dispatched to spy out the land. This woman had remarkable insight into what God was doing, even though she was not yet part of God's people. Notice she indicated that the spies and Israel had obtained quite a reputation in her land, so much so that the people were terrified of their presence. Notice also that she had insight that God was going to give her homeland to the spies and their people. Leaders must pay close attention to the reputation they and their organizations have, for a good reputation is a powerful tool for public relations and goes far beyond the effects of any advertising or marketing campaign.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is to get in touch with what the community, your neighbors, competitors, customers, clients and general public knows and says about your organization or company. Perhaps you need to attach surveys to any contact you have with the public. Then someone should monitor your organization for online and media mentions. Being involved in community activities and service organizations is another way to build and monitor your image with the public.

August 16 - Rest Stop 33

"It is a day of sabbath rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath" - Leviticus 23:32.

This verse describes the Day of Atonement, when Israel was to have solemn assemblies and offer sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins. They were forbidden to work on this day to symbolize the importance and priority of their spiritual condition over work and relationships, and go through rituals to obtain remission for sins for another year. Today there is atonement available through the sacrifice of Christ, and anyone can come at any time to obtain forgiveness and cleansing. Leaders must take time to address their spiritual condition and determine if there is sin in their lives for which they need to ask God and others for forgiveness.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Leadership Step or Rest Stop today is to examine your heart with the Holy Spirit's help to see if there is any sin issue that you need to confront. If there is, then you need to ask God's forgiveness and repent, which simply means to change your behavior from this point forward. Then you may need to go to others whom you have offended and ask forgiveness. If you cannot go to them, then call or write, but don't put it off; take care of it now.

August 17 – Power

"Hear this, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right; who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness.
In this passage, God alerted the leaders to the fact that He knew what they had been doing and He was not pleased. Notice that each one of the leadership positions was doing what they were doing for money, and they had all in effect become mercenaries - giving their services to the highest bidder. What's more, they did this and felt like God was not going to judge this perversion of power; in fact, they felt confident the Lord was on their side! Leaders must all deal with the “big three” of temptations - sex, money and power - and in this case, the leaders had failed miserably in two of the three. The lesson is that God is watching leaders and will hold them accountable for any abuse of power.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Leadership Step today is to examine your relationship with money and power. Why are you doing what you do? Is it for the money? Are you using your position and authority to enrich yourself? This is not to say that you cannot be rewarded handsomely for your work or gifts, but you cannot allow money to be your main motive. Of course, the major antidote for greed is generosity, so also look at your giving habits during today's reflection.

August 18 – Persuasion

"I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong" - Galatians 4:12.

Paul had a special relationship with all the churches he founded and that gave him some measure of authority in their lives. Yet he was always careful not to overstep that authority, but rather spent a great deal of time and energy appealing, even pleading with them (but seldom ordering them) to adhere to the standard of behavior he expected from them as believers. Effective leaders do the same thing, for they know that if they order someone to do something, they may get compliance for a while, but the people ordered will revert to old behaviors eventually, and true change and transformation will not occur once the leader's authority is removed. That means leaders must communicate a vivid picture of the benefits or necessity of the issue for which they are advocates.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** If you are not going to resort to power to get people to do what's best, then you must develop the skill of effective persuasion to get the job done. Your Step today is to examine the tools you use for persuasion - speech, writing, media, meetings - and the effectiveness of the relationships you have with your followers that enables you to produce the results and the changes you need to make. When you persuade, your people and company are both better off in the long run.

August 19 – Values

"What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead" - Philippians 3:8-11.

There is no more brilliant writing in the New Testament than Paul's letter to his favorite church in Philippi. In it he repeatedly explains his concept of leadership and the values that go with it. In today’s passage, Paul acknowledged
that he experienced some loss in return for gaining Christ, but he expressed no regret. He renounced any attempts at or gains from self-righteousness and determined that only benefits in Christ really mattered. He also confessed that he lived in the power of the Resurrection as he was suffering in this life and looking forward to the life to come in his resurrection from the dead. Every leader should have a life philosophy and blueprint for living just like Paul described in this passage.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to examine your thinking about the themes raised in this passage, along with how they are playing out in your life. You should especially look at two of them, suffering and loss, because there are no guarantees that your leadership will be successful and without pain. Are you prepared to risk losing what you worked for as you pursue God’s will? Are you willing to suffer for His sake as a leader? Are you carrying out your plans or His as you lead?

August 20 – Ethics

"Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow" - Proverbs 13:11.

Most ethical failures in leadership and business involve money. Those guilty are usually looking for a shortcut to obtain riches, although some are only involved in petty theft and pilfering. Yet stealing small is stealing still, no matter the size of the take, and God is watching to take away what someone unethically obtains. Leaders must learn to be content with what they have and work faithfully to make it increase, both personally and for their organizations. The Bible is clear, however, that anyone who is unfaithful in little things (or a small amount of money) is just a few steps away from being unfaithful in more significant things (like a larger amount of money).

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to reassess your heart where money is concerned. How faithful are you in the little things like small amounts of money or things that don’t cost very much? Do you use the company postage meter for personal mail? Use company office supplies like they were your own? And how about the bigger things? Are you looking for shortcuts to get your hands on a lot of money? What price are you paying for that pursuit of a big payday?

August 21 – Collaboration

"You have increased the number of your merchants till they are more numerous than the stars in the sky, but like locusts they strip the land and then fly away" - Nahum 3:16.

Companies and organizations form alliances with their clients, suppliers, customers, employees, donors, volunteers, neighbors, local and national governments and labor unions. These partnerships can be predatory, greedily vying to destroy the environment, competitors, rivals and other organizations. These partnerships can also do tremendous good and produce positive results for both society at large and the people and companies involved in those relationships. Leaders create or perpetuate the culture and mindset of these partnerships, so it is up to that same leadership to set the tone for the type of partnerships and collaborative efforts of which their organizations will be a part.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Leadership Step today is to consider all the partnerships of which you are a part. Are you happy with the results they are producing? Do you like the spirit in which they function? What role can you play in helping to shape, mold and change these collaborations into forces for positive change and societal contributions? It all stems from the business philosophy with which you function and, as a leader, you get to mold that business mindset daily.

August 22 – Relationships
"You have increased the number of your merchants
till they are more numerous than the stars in the sky,
but like locusts they strip the land
and then fly away" - Nahum 3:16.

In Nahum 3, the prophet spoke out against Nineveh because of a variety of sins. In this particular verse, he confronted their bad business practice of partnerships that were designed to take and not give. These partnerships were predatory and had only one objective in mind: maximize their profits and then move on to new fields that they could strip bare once again. This offended the Lord, so much so that the prophet, God's mouthpiece, spoke out against the practice to condemn it. Leaders must determine the nature of and reason for their partnerships in business, but these partnerships (including those with employees) should benefit many and not just the self-centered interests of the company and stockholders.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Step today is to do a partnership assessment with your staff, suppliers, customers and other publics. Is the nature of these partnerships to take and serve self-interests, or do they exist to benefit the environment, the community, and the long-term interests of employees and their families? Is everyone better off due to these relationships, or do you need to adjust the purpose of some to reflect an attitude of servant leadership?

August 23 - Rest Stop 34

"For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a day of sabbath rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death. Do not light a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day" - Exodus 35:2-3.

If the Sabbath is to be taken literally, then people cannot turn on a light in their homes, drive a car, ride an elevator or cook a meal on the Sabbath. All that may seem spiritual, but can simply represent a carnal desire to follow rules to make one feel spiritual. The true sense of a Sabbath is to take time to reflect on one's spiritual condition. In today's passage, the Sabbath was a time to live in the light that only God can provide. That light is to expose sin, give guidance, provide wisdom and give insight into God's word. Leaders must examine their business and leadership practices in the light of God's word and adjust anything that is contrary to or raises itself up against the knowledge or will of God.

LEADERSHIP STEP: Your Rest Stop today is to not light a fire in your home. No, that doesn't mean you cannot turn on the heat or stove. Instead, spend some prolonged time in God's light, which is His word. Your assignment is to pick a book or epistle and read it today and every day this week. With your journal open, ask God both to evaluate your leadership performance in light of this reading and to give you new insight that will make you a more effective and godly leader or follower.

August 24 – Emotional Intelligence

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us" - 1 John 1:8-10.

Emotional intelligence is defined as functioning in self-awareness, knowing what one is sensing and feeling so that person can understand how their emotions are impacting their actions. Leaders of all kinds must function in that awareness, for they have the power to make decisions that can cause great good or pain. When leaders deny the reality of their emotions, they often operate in what is called their "shadow" and followers never know if they are
relating to the real person or a hologram that appears real but is actually wearing a mask or functioning from motives that even the leader may not understand.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to spend some time probing your inner perhaps hidden being. You will do this by asking questions and making requests of the Lord you may not often make. Pray this prayer found in Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Don't deny or excuse what you hear, but record it in your journal; then repent and determine to seek help.

August 25 – Coaching

"Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding" - Jeremiah 3:15.

This verse points out several interesting things about leadership. First, God works through leaders. When the shepherds of Israel failed, God did not do away with leadership - He replaced the bad leaders with good ones. Second, good leaders are a gift from God for he gave shepherds to Israel. Third, there are some leaders who have God's heart when they lead and others who don't. Fourth, God expects leaders to lead and not simply maintain or manage. And finally, leadership’s most important tools are knowledge and understanding - of the people they lead, of the organization they lead and its mission, of the skill of leadership and of the particular work the organization was established to do.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Today's Step is to meditate on the five points from this verse as they pertain to your relationships with those in your organization. It is assumed that a coach is going to help the organization win and the people reach their full potential. Do you have the knowledge and understanding you need to coach the people and the organization forward? Are you truly leading, or are you playing it safe by maintaining things as they are and have been?

August 26 – Attitude

"He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me" - Colossians 1:28-29.

Paul knew his purpose and mission in life, which was to establish the church of Christ among the Gentiles. He had a clear vision of what he was trying to produce in those Gentile believers and he knew his strategy for how to achieve his objective. The key for today is verse 29, in which Paul indicated his attitude toward his work: he did it with great energy and effort, not waiting for it to happen but pressing forward to help make it happen. Leaders would do well to emulate Paul's focus, purpose and attitude of actively and strenuously working for the cause that God had assigned him.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your job is not simply to maintain but to lead with purpose. If your attitude is holding you back, it's time to adjust your attitude - or your work. What is your attitude toward the work you are doing? Your Step today is to ponder that question. Do you have a positive attitude toward it? Are you actively engaged or is fear holding you back? Do you love your work or is your attitude and energy level telling you it's time to look for another opportunity?

August 27 – Productivity
"All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty" - Proverbs 14:23.

While it is important that leaders help set the vision for an organization and then communicate that vision far and wide, the leaders must do more than talk. They must help direct the organization and its people to activities that will most probably produce the vision they have designed. Leaders in particular must determine what they can do that few others (if any) can do to help bring about the desired results for which the organization exists. Then leaders help rally followers to a better future by continuing to keep the vision fresh and vibrant, all the while working and contributing, being careful not to become idle because others are doing much of the work.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Today's Step is to evaluate your own productivity as a leader or follower. First, do some work to define your gifts and strengths - what it is that you bring to the team that others cannot. Second, reflect on how you can express those strengths more often. Third, think about how you can keep the vision uppermost in your mind and the minds of your colleagues. Finally, determine how you will measure your productivity for the sake of accountability.

August 28 – Finances

"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today" - Deuteronomy 8:17-18.

Leaders are often around a lot of money and have the potential to earn a lot of money. It is easy for those leaders to assume that their intelligence, leadership prowess, job skills and the like are the source of that wealth. That prideful thinking then leads to an attitude of ownership, which means they have to fight to protect what is rightfully theirs and to gain more. Today's verses remind leaders and all people to remember the Lord who is the source of all good things, including wealth. That wealth is not a sign of man's faithfulness but rather God's faithfulness. God bestows the ability to earn wealth on those whom He sovereignly chooses. That should lead to an attitude of stewardship and not ownership.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to examine your attitude toward finances and wealth. It is important you be clear that God is the source of any wealth you may have earned. Has pride or a sense of entitlement set in that has caused you to be arrogant or to put your trust in your money or your ability to earn it? Do you thank God for your financial resources? Are you careful to give back to God by being generous to your church and the poor?

August 29 – Time Management

"You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions" - Acts 20:34.

Paul had a governing value not to be a financial burden on his converts so that the gospel would not be criticized or associated with traveling teachers common in his day. He did not just talk or think about that value. That value impacted his calendar and determined how he was going to spend the hours in his day. Therefore Paul did not work first and foremost to make money; he worked to express his values and to support and further his apostolic mission. Leaders are values-driven just like Paul was, and their values show up in their calendar and their checkbook. They know that their values must be translated into action or they are just useless words.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to review the values you have written out from previous Steps to see if you are following through on your priorities in life. How are you spending your time? Is your time management
values-driven, or do you sell yourself to the loudest, most urgent bidder? Why do you work and do what you do? Is it simply to make money? If so, then money is your highest value! Is that how you want it to be known? What changes do you need to make?

August 30 - Rest Stop 35

"It is a day of sabbath rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance" - Leviticus 16:31.

The phrase *deny yourself* was used by a now-famous carpenter-turned teacher many centuries after Moses wrote these words in Leviticus: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Mark 16:24). This act of self-denial was not to be a ritual performed one day every week but was to become a lifestyle that distinguished Jesus' followers from everyone else on earth. Leaders are no exception to this edict, and must refuse their instinct toward self-indulgence by denying self. This denial takes the form of serving others, refusing to use power for personal gain, and refraining from revenge, gossip and theft.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Rest Stop today is to meditate on your current level of self-denial in your walk with Jesus. What evidence can you provide that you are truly denying your tendencies toward selfishness and self-service? Do you refuse opportunities to talk about yourself or to draw attention to your accomplishments, and accept working with others with whom you would naturally prefer not to work? Where may you be resisting the cross that Jesus is asking you to carry?

August 31 – Humility

"No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt themselves. It is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another" - Psalm 75:6-7.

Today's passage states that it is God who is the source of all promotion and demotion. There is nothing wrong with planning a career, but it can become a problem when ego, conceit or ambition take over and make it a ruthless or unrelenting pursuit of the next promotion, better office or bigger payday. Of course promotion is generally into leadership positions, and when leadership is sought simply as the next step on the career ladder, the pursuit often lacks a godly focus and understanding and involves pride. Leaders and aspiring leaders would do well to humble themselves by preparing to become leaders but trusting the process and the timetable to the ultimate Career Coach - the Lord Himself.

**LEADERSHIP STEP:** Your Step today is to examine your motives for wanting to be a leader. Is it for the money, prestige, or power, or is it born from a desire to serve and make an impact through influence and empowering others? Perhaps the best test is your reaction to times when you are overlooked for a promotion or when you are actually demoted. Did you feel hurt and slighted, or did you thank God, trusting in His perspective and will for your life and career?