

Followership

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1. Followers are Leaders

Some people say that the definition of a Leader is “someone who has people following.” They say that if nobody is following you, then you are not a leader. But not everybody follows leaders. A lot of people, the *majority* of people, are usually following followers!

Most people who are passionate about the message of an individual don't really know that individual. They didn't discover the message by listening to that individual. The leader may have momentum, but people usually hear about the message through those following that leader. In fact, people who become disciples of various gifted leaders may never actually *meet* that leader!

People come into the influence of leaders through motivated followers. They see the movement, the enthusiasm and the results of the teaching through the lives of the followers. But these are not just any followers – these are followers who have made commitments, followers who have sacrificed something, followers who are growing and are pointing people to a better way. Many of them as unpaid volunteers!

These follower/leaders may be departmental leaders with official positions. They may be people who actively engage in sharing the message voluntarily. They may even be people who are growing and demonstrating

maturity through the results of the teaching of the leader. All three of these kinds of leader/followers are exciting individuals, they are essential to the progress of the movement, they are people of influence! That is most probably you!

Stagnant people go with the flow – warming seats, watching leadership, looking for shortcuts, loopholes and excuses. They are followers who may subscribe to a message or leader, but they are passive, not active. You might be able to name a few in your organisation if you stop to think about it.



Stagnant followers have signed up and give verbal approval, but they do not – and cannot – influence others to follow because their life does not flow with the message. Left to their own idle devices, they would go another way. Their heart is not in the message, thus they halt at the perimeter and act as though they are admiring the product. They dabble only as much as others urge them.

Followership creates positive flow that counters the culture and affirms the organisation. These people are growing, encouraging and even *glowing*!

Paul taught Christians not to steal but to show “...all good fidelity, that they may **adorn** the doctrine of God our Savior in all things” (Titus 2:10). The actions of the Christians adorned – decorated and made attractive – the message (Gospel) of our saving God! Actively living the message, rather than living for personal pleasure, advertised the message and improved the chances that others would discover, admire and apply the message to their own lives!

Paul was not talking to preachers in that verse. Paul was not talking to home group leaders or even to normal Christian saints in his appeal for wise

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OR NOT.

followership. Who was he talking to? **Slaves!** Titus 2:9 says, “*Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back ... that they may **adorn** the doctrine of God.*”

Anyone can exercise inspiring followership, even slaves!

The point of this chapter is that you are influential whether you think you are or not! Your life is promoting or condemning the message or purpose of your organisation. Forget about your words – we don’t care

what you say – we are talking about your LIFE. Don't trust your position – your ACTIONS are saying more than your list of completed tasks.

If you believe in the message and if you actively try to live the message – you are both a follower and a leader! If you don't have a position now – then one may be on the way. People with purpose get recognised and get put to work. But don't worry about a position – you are a leader already! People may be secretly or unknowingly following you as you follow the leader!

The leader may never know the magnetism you have added to the movement. Those in authority may never recognise you or formally appreciate you. Those who followed your lead may never verbally acknowledge you as a deciding influence in their lives. Those little bits of “thanks” warm the heart, but they may never come. Don't worry about that. Don't get bitter. Just know that you have a great message and you are living according to a purpose – and you are leading! You are an essential element in a team that is making an impact!

⁵ Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

(1 Corinthians 3:5-7)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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