



# Christian School Insights

DELPUBLICATIONS

2018

## LESSONS LEARNED

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Upon my retirement after 35 years as Superintendent at Victory Christian in Tulsa, Oklahoma, an administrator friend asked if I had any words of wisdom that would help in her role as administrator.

My immediate response was "Listen to and obey the prompting of the Holy Spirit." This seems to be a very simple response, but it is so very true. The Holy Spirit is always speaking, it is a matter of taking the time to listen. It takes time to develop a clear reception of His voice as He speaks to our recreated spirit. In most cases, it is a matter of tuning out all the districting voices and thoughts. As this process is learned, one will be able to avoid costly pitfalls.

Let me offer for consideration a few pitfalls that the Holy Spirit wants to help you avoid.

## CHALLENGES

The first pitfall is not moving in on a challenge when it arises. Pretending that a problem will go away if it is ignored doesn't make it go away. If a vital challenge area is avoided by leadership, feelings begin to build, and anger and fear begin to erode the objectivity of those involved.

## WHAT IS RIGHT

A second pitfall the Holy Spirit wants you to avoid is not emphasizing what is right instead

of who. Resolve conflict by asking the question, what is the right thing to do. Personal power will never stand the test of truth.

## INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

Failing to take into account the best interests of the students is another pitfall. Teachers, administrators and staff exist because of students. Many times, policies and procedures are made for the easy of teaching and administration rather than what is best for the student.

## COUNSEL OF OTHERS

Making decisions without input from significant others. Exercising executive power to implement agreed-upon solutions to challenges works better when those who have to implement the solution are involved in the solution.

## AUTHORITY

Consider this pitfall—not making clear to teachers and other administrators the limitations of the authority to make decisions. No one can share decisions beyond the authority that he has. Frustration is created within groups (or an individual) if the group (or individual) is led to think it can make a decision that it doesn't have the authority to make. A clear understanding on decision making parameters between the school administration and pastor and school board with facilitate the decision-making process.

## **SENSITIVITY**

Not emphasizing what is in your spirit and only focusing on what is on your mind. Spirit-directed education requires a keen sensitivity to the Spirit of God. Every decision should be based on confirmation and inner witness of the spirit.

How can this sensitivity be enhanced? The best way that I know is to spend time reading the Word of God and having a personal devotional time. Praying in the Spirit as recommended by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:15, and then praying with your understanding.

This helps bring direction from the Holy Spirit to your heart and then into your mind through impressions, phrases, and mental images. As you pray in the spirit, you receive insights as to direction you need to take or avoid. Expect to receive direction and understanding for a particular situation. Praying in the spirit sensitizes your heart to the things of the Spirit.

You can also increase your sensitivity by maintaining an attitude of praise and worship. The Word of God says that He inhabits the praises of His people (Psalms 22:3). This means that God “dwells” in the atmosphere of His praise. Some of the solutions to challenges I was facing in the school came into my spirit during times of corporate and individual praise and worship.

## **THE WORD**

Not using the authority of the uncompromised Word of God. The Word of God needs to be spoken over every challenge situation. Better yet, preventive prayer should take place on a daily basis. Isaiah 55:11 says, “*So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*” By speaking the Word of God you can bring about change in any situation. All it takes is believing the Word that is spoken and expecting it to come to pass.

## **MATTHEW 18**

Another pitfall is failure to follow the Matthew 18 principle. Whether it be teachers, parents, administrators, or other staff, the Matthew 18 principle must be followed in order to build trust and confidence.

As an administrator, we are there to serve others. When others are successful, we are successful. Going out of our own way to take care of the needs of teachers and students displays love. Love covers a multitude of failures.

## **FOLLOW THROUGH**

Not following through is a pitfall to avoid. When a person submits a request to the administrator and it is ignored or neglected, attitudes of resistance develop immediately. Learn to follow through on matters that affect people—no matter how small it may be.

## **REASONS**

Avoid the pitfall of not sharing explanations. When no explanations are given for decisions that affect the staff, students, and parents, attitudes of resistance begin to develop. The administrator must learn to share with people the reason why decisions are made. Everyone may not agree, but they'll be happy their opinions were heard or that the administrator was willing to explain. When teachers are the last ones to hear about decisions that are made, they feel neglected and feel that the administrator does not value them.

## **FOLLOW-UP**

Failing to follow up verbal directives with a written memo or email should be avoided. People tend to forget over time. A simple follow-up memo is important to keep projects and people on task.

## **WORK NEEDS**

Avoid not being sensitive to the work needs of others. In any Christian school environment there is always more work than can be done. Exercise caution in delegating tasks.