



## ***An Open Letter to Pastors and Lay Leaders***

***(From One Who Has Been There)***

Or: ***“Lessons from the Top Ten Mistakes I Have Made in Ministry.”***

Section 3 - “Empowered” --Part 1 –The Ebbing Tide

Section 5 – “Ennobled”

Section 5 - “Enabled”

### ***Empowered - Part One                      “The Ebbing Tide”***

1 Timothy 4:14-16 says: “Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”<sup>1</sup>

There is an analogy to be seen between marriage and the spiritual life of a leader.

The power of that first love in marriage is like the full rushing of the incoming tide- full, rich and exciting. But over time nature seems to change the course of the surge and slowly, imperceptibly the tide begins to recede. There are signs of the ebbing tide when you begin to take each other for granted. The depth of communication in your life begins to diminish and instead of talking about your dreams, you talk about what happened at work.

This time when the ebbing tide is rushing in is much more dangerous than when the tide is outgoing, for that tide is hardly noticeable. You may not notice the changes at first because just living takes up so much time and energy. If you do nothing, then as time passes, the tide recedes. You start getting on each other’s nerves and little things begin to fray your relationship. Most marriages don’t fail in the heat of passion. The relationship simply expires because it stagnates from neglect, and in the end, the once ardent lovers lay exhausted at the foot of a relational wall that has grown too high to climb.

The natural heart experiences the same tide in the spiritual life. While there are times of rich experience and deep communion with heaven, with the ebb and flow of life, there is a tendency to undetectably slide away from the heart of God. Just as in marriage, the spiritual life follows the path of least resistance. With the journey in life there is a natural slide away from the heart of God. God never moves, He is always steadfast, always there and His love never changes. You really don’t have to do anything to slip away- you just go on with your busy life and over time your love of deep Bible study starts to slip and you become drawn into just doing life. You will begin to notice that you are overly preoccupied with administration, committees, crisis and the cares of leadership.

Next week: **Signs of the Ebbing Tide**

*Blessings, Ken Crawford*

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<sup>1</sup>The New International Version, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.



