



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.”***

Empowered - Part Two

“Signs of the Ebbing Tide”

1Timothy 4:16

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.¹

I believe the discipline of deep study and prayer is the greatest challenge to leaders. Satan’s mortgage on the human soul is not the battles, but the weariness that comes with continued taxation of the human spirit. As in marriage, desire ebbs with the outgoing tide; fervency indiscernibly fades and is replaced by a growing complacency. The leader says “I just don’t feel like study tonight. I am weary, maybe a football game instead.” The heart is easily drawn away from spirituality to sports, recreation, good books or even movies.

There are signs to watch for the ebbing tide:

1. Life moves from one crises to another and becomes an emotional roller coaster.
2. Your personal peace is replaced by a restless spirit.
3. Ardour moves from internal to external.
4. Self- examination dries up and as a result, you easily become judgmental of others. Issues become black and white and you no longer see motives, only actions.

When spiritual eyesight begins to fail, you are the last to know. Other can tell more about your experience as a leader than you think for as you become preoccupied with wanting to cross every T and dot every I, others notice the lack of compassion and caring in your eyes.

Slack Tide: Finally, there will come moments of self-examination when inside you know that the tide is going out. The heart begins to ask questions “*Why don’t I desire the heart of God more? If I could just work up greater desire,*” but deep inside you the Holy Spirit speaks. “*What are you doing here, Elijah?*”

I know what I am talking about for there have been times when I came to a painful conclusion that in the constant tug between spiritual leadership and organizational leadership in my life, organizational leadership was winning. Slowly, yet imperceptivity I had become preoccupied with organization and administration and the real cost was to my own spirituality.

Next Week: “Empowered” Part 3: *My Personal Journey Blessings,* Ken Crawford

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

