Differentiation #5:  How Can I Lead People to Be

Committed to the Lord – not Other Things or People?

Joshua 24:26-31

Introduction:

1. It is easy to get stuck and not grow as I should.
   1. People.
   2. Money, material things.
   3. Feelings.
   4. Irresponsibility.
2. There are some indications of that:
   1. Blaming.
   2. Prejudice.
   3. Living in the past.
   4. Living in the future without being responsible in the present.
   5. Feeling helpless and hopeless or arrogant and in control.
   6. Resentment, bitterness.
   7. Lack of personal commitment, goals, growth, purpose, mission in doing God’s will.
3. Jim Sollisch:  I am 17 years old.  It is summer, and football practice is about to begin.  I am supposed to be the starting quarterback in this, my senior year, having worked all winter and spring with the coach, reviewing films, reading defenses, diagraming formations and plays.  Actually I have worked my entire life for this chance, throwing 150 passes a day through a tire my father rigged in the opening of our garage, lifting thousands of pounds of weights in our damp basement before two-a-day practices begin.

I am in my room trying to figure out how to tell my father that I want to quit; that I’d rather not give up my after-school job to play yet another year of football.  I know too well the old sports adage that adorns many locker-room walls:  ”A quitter never wins, and a winner never quits.”  I know how fathers live through their sons’ accomplishments on the athletic field.

And now he is in my room, and I tell him.  He smiles and says, “I’m proud of you.  You’ve figured out something it took me 40 years to realize—something most people never learn—to follow your heart, not other people’s expectations.  Of course I’m not disappointed.  I’m proud to have a son like you.”

In that moment my father gave more to me than many fathers give their sons in a lifetime ( Reader’s Digest , June 1997, pp. 47,48).

1. How can I be free to follow the Lord and lead others to be free--not stuck to me?
2. Be there yourself. Joshua 1:7-9
3. Remind them of their history – how did we get here? Joshua 24:1-13
4. Teach them their responsibility to God. Joshua 24:14
   1. Fear the Lord.
   2. Serve Him in
      1. Sincerity.
      2. Truth.
      3. Put away the gods.
      4. Serve the Lord.
5. Lead them in looking at their choices. Joshua 24:15
6. Commit and demonstrate your loyalty regardless of what others may choose. Joshua 24:15
7. Listen to their response. Joshua 24:16-18
8. Let them know
   1. Staying faithful to the Lord will not be easy. Joshua 24:19
   2. The consequences of forsaking the Lord. Joshua 24:20
9. Confirm their commitment.
   1. The people restated their resolve. Joshua 24:21
   2. Joshua said they had chosen for themselves. Joshua 24:22
   3. He reminded them again of the implications of their commitment. Joshua 24:23
      1. Put away foreign gods.
      2. Incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel.
   4. The people restated their resolve again. Joshua 24:24
10. Make an agreement (covenant). Joshua 24:25,26
11. Provide a reminder. Joshua 24:26,27
    1. A reminder can be an object.
       1. Wedding ring.
       2. Key to heart for sixteen-year-old girl. (James Dobson)
       3. Stone. 1 Samuel 7:12
    2. A reminder can be an event.
       1. The passover.
       2. The Lord’s supper.
       3. The woman anointing Jesus. Mark 14:9
12. Release the person or persons. Joshua 24:28
13. Results. Joshua 24:29-31
14. I want to be able to say with Joshua: Joshua 24:14,15
15. If

If you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs and blaming it on you.

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,

But make allowance for their doubting too;

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,

Or being lied about, don’t deal in lies,

Or being hated, don’t give way to hating,

And yet don’t look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream – and not make dreams your master;

If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim;

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster

And treat those two impostors just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you’ve spoken

Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,

Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,

And stoop and build ‘em up with worn out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings

And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,

And lose, and start again at your beginnings

And never breathe a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew

To serve your turn long after they are gone,

And so hold on when there is nothing in you

Except the Will which says to them:  ”Hold on!”

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,

Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,

If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,

If all men count with your, but none too much;

If you can fill the unforgiving minute

With sixty seconds worth of distance run,

Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it,

And – which is more – you’ll be a Man, my son!

              − Rudyard Kipling