

The Foibles and Fallibility of Christian Leaders

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The inconsistencies, unattended weaknesses, eccentricities, normalizations of subtle sinful habits, relational neglectfulness or awkwardness, sometimes grating quirks, phases of tiredness and even laziness, and susceptibility to pride — just to begin the list — illustrate what kinds of things can be found in



almost every Christian leader at one time or another. They should remind us that we are all treated mercifully by God and cannot claim that any leadership position or recognition is fully “deserved” but strategically assigned by the Lord. He is a master at using flawed people.

Blessed are the true Christian leaders who understand their need for help from God and express that to God. Christian leaders are formative works of God in character, skills, knowledge, faith, love and even enthusiasm, who have been given responsibility nonetheless for which they often feel entirely inadequate except for Christ’s help.

In Christ these leaders are bold, but on their own they are nothing. They are on display to illustrate what God can do, not what they can do. They are an example to follow not because they are perfect or inherently strong, but because they have a heart to honor Christ. When they see their sin they know they need his help, and are transparent to the proper people, and humble before all.

They carry their extra burden of responsibility that others often never feel or would even want to feel if they understood it, all for the only One who does deserve all our lavish praise and sacrificial efforts.

Encourage your leaders, pray for them, help them serve Christ as they serve you, overlook some things just as they overlook the faults you have, confront them with love when necessary. If you are prayerful and spiritually-minded and aware of your own sins, follow them as they follow Christ, but don’t idolize them. Encouragement is different than that.

You will encourage them the most by seeking to learn from them the truths God is teaching, showing your interest in your eyes and alertness, doing more than is asked, asking questions in order to grow, including them in your life and around your table, speaking well of them for the good of the church, seeking to know how you can help, telling and showing them your appreciation, and in so many other ways. You cannot encourage too much because encouraged leaders are the best leaders. In a way, you are one of God’s best ways to shape the leaders you have been given.

I know that there are leaders that should not be leaders. That’s another matter I’m not addressing now. But what about your leaders. For most, your leaders are a whole lot like you, with a deep desire to do what the Head of the church wants, a calling to do it, a willingness to shoulder the burden, and a decisive commitment to remain available to the One who showed them what they are to do — even with their inadequacies. Emulate that and be thankful for all they are doing that is good.

If this is true you will know why you must pray for your leaders every day.