**Reaching Peak Potential**

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Leadership Thought

The ability, for each leader to reach peak potential is always within grasp. It is only reached through their power of choice in making right decisions.

Scripture Reading:

Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser:

teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

--Proverbs 9:9

Reaching Peak Potential should be the goal of every leader. Nothing else will do. Perhaps the peak for ach individual leader is different, some higher than others, and some lower, but we all have a peak potential and we should all be reaching for it. Peak potential is something every leader eau reach in their leadership areas of responsibility.

Some leaders come with high expectations and some with low expectations. Some leaders have high returns on those expectations and some have low returns. The result of leaders reaching their peak potential, though, lies in the power of choice that each one has and the decisions that they make with those choices. The power lies within the leader. Outside influences and powers do have an effect, but ultimately the potential leader's reach depends on their personal power of choice and how high of a peak that they want to reach for!

Let's look at two different leaders that had two different levels of expectations, two different returns, and how each, through their power of choice in their decisions, determined the peak potential that they reached.

Reuben — The Leader that Failed to Lead

"High Expectations - Low Returns"

And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: fir she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.

Genesis 29:32

Reuben was the first-born son of Jacob, one of the patriarchs. He was born to be a leader. He was 'destined to be a man of greatness, a great man, and a great leader. He was born with high hopes and high expectations, especially of love as his mother tried to secure the love of her husband, Jacob. What we do or don't do will not secure God's love for us because His love for us is unconditional and everlasting. Yet, what we do or don't do and the decisions we make can and will please the Lord and secure His precious promises. That's what determines whether we reach our peak potential.

Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:

Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.

Genesis 49:3-4

Reuben was supposed to be a man of influence and power, a man's man, but he failed to lead in the right direction. He also took others with him as he continually made bad choices in life. His decisions influenced even his descendants greatly as they never became a tribe or a people of prominence or power. You never read of the tribe of Rueben being large or being great in anything. The personal choices that he made in life caused his downfall as a leader instead of his reaching peak potential. He had `high expectations' but only produced 'low returns'.

Jephthah — The Leader that Chose not to Fail

"Low Expectations — High Returns"

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah.

And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto hint, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman.

Judges 11:1-2

Jephthah was born without any kind of high expectations or any sense of destiny. He was not born to lead. He was not born to be great. He was born the son of a harlot. No fanfare. No celebration. If he had any sense of destiny at all, he was destined to never be a man of greatness, never to be a great man. He was an outcast with no power or influence. He didn't have a family. The only family he had known had thrust him out. He was born just one of many, to a 'bad' family, in a 'bad' town, in a 'bad' time, with a 'bad' legacy, with a 'bad' heritage, and the list goes on.

Yet Jephthah did lead. He became a great leader. He was a mighty man of valor and he became this by making right decisions. He did lead in the right direction and he took others with him. None of the low expectations others had of him mattered because he became God's `man for the hour'!

Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tab: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him. And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. And it was so, that when the children of Ammonn made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children Of Aillinall.

And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress? And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

Judges 11:3-8

Although Jephthah wasn't born destined to be a great leader, he became the head of all of the inhabitants of Gilead. He truly reached his peak potential. Through the power of choice, he determined that circumstances wouldn't dictate to him what he could or would become. Amazingly, he decided not to stay stuck in the quagmire he found himself in. He moved on. He could have stayed in a state of bitterness because of what had happened with his `family' but instead decided to reach beyond and exceed other's expectations. As someone said, we can either let life's circumstances and experiences make us bitter or better. Jephthah had low expectations' but produced 'high returns'!

The odds may be against a person becoming a powerful leader, a peak leader, and reaching their peak potential, but leaders shouldn't let those odds determine the outcome.

Choose to be a better leader!

Decide to reach your peak potential!

The above article, “Reaching Peak Potential,” is the third chapter from the book, A Leader’s Way Up by Steve Smith.

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