

Could I share three teaching points, three things I am still learning but ideas that have helped me in the past? Maybe they can help you.

Do the things you can control, and trust God with what you can't control. It is so difficult to learn not to see the things we can't control as dead ends or roadblocks and then shut down the possibilities of our church and ministry because we lose hope for success. What we can control, change, add or do is where the future of the church is. When we work on that, we are often surprised at the possibilities and hope is reborn. There are always unseen opportunities if we take the time to pray, refocus and discover what can be done to grow the life and mission of the church, and in the process, we grow ourselves and not just list the reason why we have or must fail.

Effective leadership is not authority-based, it is relationship-based. One of the things that has really changed today is what effective leadership really looks like. There was a time it was authority-based, meaning title or position driven. I am convinced that is no longer true. It is now relationship-based, trust and mutual respect driven. When authority becomes the only foundation of leadership, then the relationship has broken down and often the result will be eventual failure. This is probably truer in the church than anywhere else. Taking the time to build trusting, loving, Christ-centered relationships with staff, lay leaders, community leaders and people and our church family will be time well spent if our hope is to lead a church in life and mission for many years.

Many pastors and church leaders (I think anyway) get pride and integrity mixed up. There is a time when it is about ethics or the core beliefs of a pastor or church leader, and then again there are other times it is just about the pastor or church leader. It's not about swallowing pride; it's about living in humility. It is remarkable to me that humility is a key component of leadership, but for those who want to be Christian leaders, it is central to long-term success in the church. It's in the Bible too. It has always surprised me how some pastors and leaders are willing to damage their ministry and church for ideals that have nothing to do with integrity but everything to do with personal pride. There is a reason the invitation to follow Jesus Christ involves picking up a cross.