

## LEADING BY PREACHING

Edited and adapted by Bob Young,  
from A. W. Tozer, *Tozer on Christian Leadership*

Often the preacher becomes another person when he enters the pulpit. The contrast with what he is during the week and in his personal life is apparent. Why do some preachers try to become a different person or get a new voice or a new sense of solemnity when they enter the pulpit? Why cannot the preacher enter the pulpit with the same spirit and the same sense of reverence that he has when talking about daily life?

A great challenge in preaching: Lord, help me be a person of integrity. Give me the grace to be the same man everywhere—In the pulpit, in my daily life, in rush hour traffic, and at dinner with my wife. **The law of the leader says that one can lead others only as far as he himself has gone.**

Therefore, the preacher must personally experience what he would teach; he must model in his own life what he seeks to develop in the lives of the church members. Otherwise he will find himself driving the flock rather than leading. The preacher must cultivate his own heart before he preaches to change the hearts of others.

In preaching this is the difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge. Many preachers can share head knowledge. Fewer are those preachers who effectively share heart knowledge. Why? While many preachers have focused on head knowledge, fewer have developed a worshipful heart and a healthy relationship with God. The preacher who tries to develop in others heart knowledge of truth that he has not personally experienced will surely fail. The most common response to this frustration is coercion and manipulation. Sermons are filled with moralizing—you should, must, have to, ought to.... Such words are not the words of leaders. These are words designed to drive people. Little is as disheartening as the sight of a vexed and confused preacher lashing out at a bewildered flock in a vain attempt to persuade them to go beyond the point he himself has reached.

The law of the leader tells preachers that it is better to cultivate the soul than the voice. We cannot take our people beyond where we ourselves have been. It is vitally important that *we be men of God in the highest and best sense of that term.*

*“Lord, help me to listen to you and be spiritually nurtured, to have my soul cultivated by you in silence and solitude.”*