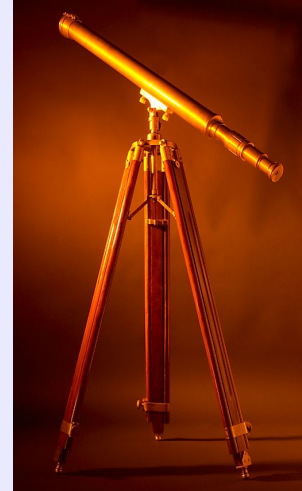




The following quote from Annie Dillard's book, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, struck a chord within me recently. She says,

*Experience has taught the [human] race that if knowledge of God is the end, then these habits of life are not the means but the condition in which the means operates. You do not have to do these things; not at all. God does not, I regret to report, give a hoot. You do not have to do these things — unless you want to know God. They work on you, not on Him.*

*You do not have to sit outside in the dark. If, however, you want to look at the stars, you will find that darkness is necessary. But the stars neither require nor demand it.*



Alas, that is how we view leadership training and development sometimes. And if we are honest with ourselves, we will say the same is true of any other process or program that sounds too

business-like. We view it as a series of habits or do-s and don't-s. We think of it in terms of the things we do, or at least should do, that will make us great or visionary leaders.

I blogged about this topic on my personal blog not too long ago. I felt it had application to both our personal relationship with God as well as our relationship with the Church within the context of our leadership roles.

## Here are some thoughts that relate to our personal relationship with God:

- We think God wants us to go to church. — God wants us to be in His presence.
- We think God wants us to sing hymns vs. contemporary music. — God wants us to worship Him.
- We think God wants us to do good works. — God want us to love one another as Christ loved us.
- We think God wants us to give 10% of everything we earn. — God wants us to give it all to Him and allow Him to use it to build His Kingdom.
- We think Gods wants us to DO a bunch of stuff. — God wants us to know Him intimately. And that may mean sitting alone in the dark sometimes.

**So, what is the application to church leadership and development? Well, here are my thoughts and observations.**

- We want to be the pastor that God calls us to be. — God wants us to be willing to learn and grow and try something new.
- We want to be the board member or elder that God calls us to be. — God wants us to learn to follow before we lead.
- We want to do big things for God. — God wants us to be willing to walk through the doors that He opens for us.
- We want to have a vision for the lost and dying in the world. — God wants us to notice the runny-nosed kids that need someone to sit in Children’s Church and help the fidgety to not be so fidgety.

And like just like our own personal relationship with Jesus Christ and Holiness that I often write about, we don’t have to do any of these things at all if we don’t want to. The Holy Spirit waits to be invited into our hearts to transform us into His image. Likewise, the “leadership police” are not going to kick your door down and demand that you sharpen your skills and your God-given talents. But if you want move beyond where you are now and you are tired of doing the same thing over and over again, then maybe it is time to do something about it. Maybe it is time to seek some help from others in ministry who can walk side by side with you and encourage and coach you along the way.



**Pastor, does that make sense to you?**

**Board member, does that make sense to you?**

If so, then we have good news for you. We can help you discover your leadership potential and to implement the vision that God has given you and to your church. And we can do all of this in such a way that we bring honor and glory to God through the process.

Iron Sharpens Iron consultants know the struggles of ministry in the local church. We know both the joys and sorrows that often accompanies working in a volunteer or staff position. Perhaps you are reading this right now and you are weary. Be encouraged. God did allow you to be in your place of ministry and service without providing all that you need through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

You can lean upon Jesus Christ day by day for the strength that you need to be a worker in His Kingdom. And you really are doing “Kingdom” work.

So, I say to you today — Keep up the good work!

**Iron Sharpens Iron Consultants**

**Moving from Vision to Action**

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