

CALL TO LEADERSHIP

There are three things that I want each of our young readers to walk away with from this article and if you remember this a week from now, then I will have done my job.

- 1 WITH LEADERSHIP COMES RESPONSIBILITY; KNOW WHO YOUR FOLLOWERS ARE AND WHY**
- 2 THEY ARE FOLLOWING YOU; AND KNOW WHERE YOU ARE LEADING THEM TO PRIOR**
- 3 TO ASSUMING THE LEADERSHIP ROLE**



Since all of you are leaders, otherwise you would not be reading this. You must know that leadership is inextricably tied to responsibility. Hence, the moral dilemma is this, "The more knowledge that you have the less ignorant you become." Let me say that again, "The more knowledge that you have the less ignorant you become." Have I lost any of you for fear of gaining more responsibility? I presume this is the reason why you are still reading. Let us dig deeper by using an analogy. Leadership is like religion. The more you know about God and His teachings, the more accountable you become for your actions in His eyes. Therefore, by the mere fact that you are reading this article, you have a moral obligation to be a responsible member of the African American community.

There are no excuses. For those of you who do not know what excuses are let me share the definition that I was taught with you. "Excuses are useless tools of incompetence that build monuments of nothingness and those who use them seldom amount to anything." - Author Unknown. I am certain that you all want to amount to something, thus we will refrain from using excuses any longer.

Knowing who your followers are and why they follow is very important. Being able to relate to people and what motivates them is a way to obtain the outcome you desire. For example, in high school, I would use the fact that there would be hundreds of attractive young Black women at the United Black Student Union conferences to lure more young Black men to attend because their turnout was significantly lower than the women. My theory was that once they attended,

they would be forced to at least be exposed to self-knowledge and from there, it was their own responsibility to make an educated decision about their future. In hindsight, this was very inappropriate. I should not have to use bait in order to spiritually and mentally feed an intellectually malnourished group of individuals.



To address this lack of motivation of bettering oneself starts first at home. We as a people have lost our core spiritual, mental, and physical values that ought to come from family. Your parents or primary care givers should live by example. They should attend church with you, and counsel you when you have problems, and prepare nutritional meals for you. If this model does not apply to you, you must take on the initiative to create this environment independently. Growing up in a single-parent household is no longer an excuse, unfortunately, it is becoming the norm.

Since you are all leaders, you should lead your followers to a healthy sense of peace and tranquility in this midst of chaos. Author and Pastor T.D. Jakes talks about these essential components of life in the order of importance, Faith, Family, and Finance in his book titled, The Great Investment. Although I have not read the entire book, I have gotten the gist of what he is saying. We all should have an unswerving love for a higher being. Whatever you may call Him. If you follow His Commandments you will be an awesome human being.

Family is the next important priority, which usually is taken for granted the most. Never choose a career where you cannot make your family a top priority. If you find yourself more than 75% of your time outside of their presence, it is time for a new job. Your family will always be there whether you have a job or not.

Regarding finances, you should lead your peers to financial stability. In order to do that, you yourself must study personal finance. When you go to college, dozens of companies will bombard you with credit cards. Keep one and cut up the rest. Buy an occasional meal or article of clothing and payoff the entire balance at the end of each month. I guarantee that you have the best credit amongst your peers when you graduate with an incredibly high credit limit. If you have a job now or plan on working while in college, you should set at least 20-25% of your income aside and put it in a savings account. You should always have a cushion just in case something unexpected happens. As you get older, the rule is to have 6 months worth of your living expenses in the bank.

In conclusion, leadership is not based solely on knowledge. Just because you are reading this article does not necessarily mean that you are a leader. Leadership is based on action. A good leader is a good follower and must be able to decipher which one to be at right time, based on the circumstances he/she is presented with. A leader is humble at all times. The Lord says, "The one who exalts himself will be humbled and the one who is humble will be exalted." ©

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