

Seven Leadership Traps to Avoid

A lot of ministries begin with a bang, then explode with new growth. But after the initial growth, they plateau. I have seen this repeated thousands of times from pastors I've talked with over the years.

God doesn't want ministries to stagnate. Not only does he want them to succeed, but he also wants *us* to succeed as ministry leaders.

To help us achieve this goal, God has given us examples of errors to avoid — seven common traps of leadership that Satan is most likely to use to keep your ministry from becoming all that God wants it to be.

1. You stop growing personally

Whenever you find yourself resisting a new way of doing something, defending the status quo, or opposing a change that God has told you to make, watch out — you're about to lose your place of leadership.

What's the key to overcoming this leadership trap? You must continue developing your skills, your character, your perspective, your vision, your heart for God, and your dependence upon him.

Never stop learning. Read and reread the Bible. Listen to podcasts and sermons. Read books and blogs and magazines. Attend conferences and seminars. Keep feeding yourself!

2. You stop caring

The leader who stops having a passion for ministry won't last long. This is one of the subtlest traps in ministry — you go through the motions of serving the Lord because you know it's the right thing to do, but your heart is not in it. That's no way to serve God.

If you've found yourself in this trap, there's hope. If you want to recover your heart for people, you must do the things you did in the beginning.

Start acting the way you used to act when you were passionate about ministry. Even if you don't *feel* passionate, *act* passionately.

It's easier to act your way into a feeling than it is to feel your way into an action. If you act loving, those feelings will come back. So, do the things that originally brought you joy in ministry.

3. You stop listening

Learn to listen and be sensitive to others. Encourage the people you serve in ministry to talk to

you. Let them tell you about their problems, their troubles, their fears, their aspirations, their dreams, and their hurts. Be open to suggestions and constructive criticism, and look for other perspectives.

4. You get distracted

Many things can distract you from ministry. Personal or health problems can distract you. Competing interests can distract you. Finances can distract you. Things that you think are fun and good and wonderful can distract you. Satan doesn't care if you aren't sinning while distracted, because as long as you're distracted, you aren't doing what God wants you to do.

But God wants us to stay focused. Never forget your mission. The Bible says in Luke 9:62, "*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*" (KJV).

Stay focused. Don't get distracted.

5. You get complacent

Complacency is the enemy of a good leader. If God says go for it, stick your neck out! Never stop depending on the Lord. Stop coasting. Take some risks in faith. Push the envelope. Attempt something that cannot be accomplished in the power of the flesh. Say to yourself, "What am I going to try in my ministry this next year that I know is bound to fail unless God bails me out?" Unless God is your only safety net, you're not truly living by faith. Depend on the Lord.

6. You become arrogant

I've seen this again and again. When a leader becomes arrogant, it leads to ruin. When you think that everything depends on you, when you don't think you need the Lord's help in your ministry because you've got it all together, watch out.

If you sense that you've become prideful and arrogant about your leadership, humble yourself. Submit your heart to God for softening, and bow before his greatness.

7. You fail to delegate

When a ministry plateaus, God is telling you that you've reached the limit of what he's empowered you to do by yourself. You need to move from doing to delegating.

Involve other people in your ministry. Move from being a minister to a manager of ministers. Managing is a ministry in itself. D. L. Moody said it like this: "I'd rather put 10 men to work than do the work of 10 men."

If you avoid these seven traps, you'll go a long way toward building a ministry that lasts.

> [Read more from Rick.](#)
