



"The Modern Tragedy Of Insecure Pastors And Church Leaders"

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Introduction

As I begin to write this article I want to say that this is not the type of article that I prefer to write. But, because of the tragic negative consequences that are taking place in the churches throughout America and all over the world, I feel extremely burdened to address the issue that is so hindering the work of Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel in fulfillment of the Great Commission. This issue is the **insecurity of so many pastors and church leaders**. Please bear in mind that I have been preaching the Gospel for over 50 years and I have had the privilege of preaching in hundreds of churches worldwide and in meeting and knowing countless numbers of other pastors, preachers, evangelists, staff people and lay church leaders in many parts of the world. Therefore, I sincerely believe that I can credibly address this subject of insecurity with integrity and with a genuine non-ending burden which never completely goes away. I am truly concerned at the damage that is being done to our churches, but also, to the homes and families of insecure pastors and church leaders everywhere. Therefore, I ask all of you readers to read this article with objectivity and see if God will speak to your hearts about this matter of insecurity, and hopefully, this message might provide a warning for those that are engulfed by insecurity to stop the insecurity and find out who you really are in Christ and quit allowing Satan to use this horrible thing to keep you from your potential and to prevent the churches all over the world to be hindered in their purpose for existence.

In beginning to cover the subject of insecurity, let me start by sharing a few things that I read a couple years ago on this subject from a web site called "pastors.com" which was written by the former Southern Baptist Convention President, Dr. Ronnie Floyd. Dr. Floyd made a great statement on page one of the article entitled "How to Keep Your Insecurity From Hurting Your Church". This is what he said, "One of the major challenges that prevent many churches from being focused on their mission can be summarized in one word: **insecurity**. It eliminates opportunities for evangelism, planting churches, ministry expansion, and making disciples because it creates conflict in the church. I have even seen insecurity ruin ministries." Also on page one of this same article, Dr. Floyd says, "I will never forget talking with a leader who served with his Pastor for decades in one of the strongest ministries in America. I asked him about the challenges of adjusting from leading church staff leaders from people in the world. He remarked, 'I have found that ministers are the most insecure people I have ever met in my life'. Folks, I know that this is a strong statement, but sometimes I agree after being around ministers for over 50 years. I sincerely regret that this is true, but yet we will never stop this disease from spreading unless we deal with the reality of the problem and then begin to provide some solutions from the Bible to stop this seeming epidemic that is producing so much hurt throughout the churches in all of the world.

The Definition Of This Insecurity

Before I give you a list of what I believe is some of the genuine causes of insecurity, I think we need a valid definition of what real insecurity is. This definition comes from one of the few books in print on this subject. The book is entitled, "The Tender Heart" and it was written by Psychologist, Dr. Joseph Nowinski. On page 23 of this book the author states, "the word insecurity has a particular meaning and a particular cause. Insecurity refers to a profound sense of self-doubt—a deep feeling of uncertainty about our basic worth and our place in the world. Insecurity is associated with chronic self-consciousness, along with a chronic lack of confidence in ourselves and anxiety about our relationships. The insecure man or woman lives in constant fear of rejection and a deep uncertainty about whether his or her own feelings and desires are legitimate. In men as well as women, insecurity comes from a combination of sensitive disposition and experiences of loss, abuse, rejection, or neglect." I agree with this definition completely! I say this because in all of the extremely insecure pastors and church leaders I know, there is vivid evidence of these personality or character traits.

In order to expand on this definition I want to mention that in recent months I have been teaching in one of our Bible College classes the book entitled, "The Spirit-Controlled Temperament" written by Dr. Tim LaHaye. In this study we have discovered that every human being is born with one temperament or possibly a combination of one, two, or even three. Dr. LaHaye mentions that there are four main temperaments, but there are as many as twelve other temperament blends that people may be born with. Our primary temperaments come to us genetically from our parents and grandparents. It is reasonable to understand that people who are born with a very sensitive temperament or disposition may be affected by many circumstances and experiences in childhood, adolescence, and even adulthood which may lead to extreme insecurity later in life. Many of these negative experiences or circumstances may have been preventable and some may have not have been. Yet, if we have been born with sensitive dispositions or temperaments, we must refuse to allow these to destroy our self-worth and put us into the valley of insecurity. So, to properly diagnose this insecurity, we need to take a look at some of the causes that contribute enormously to our insecurity.

The Contributing Causes Of This Insecurity

As I begin to discuss the contributing causes to much of the insecurity among modern day pastors and church leaders, I feel I need to tell you that most of the causes that I am going to mention in the next several paragraphs are not from other books and information that I have gleaned from by just reading other writer's materials, but these causes that I am going to list come from all my years of personal study and firsthand observations I have made as I have traveled all over the United States, to many parts of the world, and from my personal experience working with scores of preachers, pastors, evangelists, and missionaries. You might say that the causes that I shall list come from a composite of different circumstances, situations,

and experiences, both bad and good. You see, yes, I have had many bad experiences with struggling insecure pastors trying to be somebody, but I have also been blessed with a lot of wonderful experiences working with solid secure men of God who have made it possible for me to compare the insecure ones with the solid very secure servants of God who have growing ministries and extremely fruitful service. So, as you read the discussion of these causes, please know that these causes are not given as criticism of any servants of God, but as information to try to warn insecure leaders and to help these leaders find God's remedy for this terrible emotional and spiritual disease. Now, let's get started with these causes of insecurity.

Insecurity Is Caused By A Genetic Temperament Or Disposition

The first cause I want to mention is that every one of these insecure church leaders seem to have been born with a temperament or disposition which is extremely sensitive to everything that goes on around them. This extreme sensitivity probably comes genetically from their parents or probably more so from their grandparents. In fact, I have heard some of these insecure church leaders mention that they just can't help the way they are, but merely are descendants of others in their families who had the same problems. The sad thing is that these individuals who believe this often use their so-called generational curse as an excuse to never change or modify their behavior. Therefore, because they don't make an attempt at allowing God's Holy Spirit to change them, they end up just simply causing problems for themselves, others around them, and for the very ministry or church they should be building. Dr. John Maxwell, an expert on leadership, says in his book entitled, "The 21 Indispensable Qualities Of A Leader", pages 121-122, that these insecure leaders don't provide security for others, they take more from people than they give, they continually limit their best people, and they continually limit the organization." On page 122 of this same book, Dr. Maxwell quotes from another one of his books on leadership entitled, "The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership", and says, "...only secure leaders give power to others". So, because of the enormous amount of damage which insecure leaders cause (We will discuss this later in this article), something has to be done to help these insecure leaders discover their missing security. Thus, we might say that insecure people are not completely to blame for their insecurity because it starts with a very sensitive temperament passed down to them. But, these insecure people can't and must not use this genetic problem as an excuse to stay insecure when there is help available through the Word of God and by the working of the Holy Spirit.

Insecurity Is Caused By Experienced Trauma

In the book, "The Tender Heart", by Dr. Nowinski, which I mentioned earlier in this article, the author says on page 43 the following: "As important as our attachments to our parents are, these are not the only attachments we form growing up. Our experiences in relationships throughout childhood and adolescence can also contribute to whether we grow up secure or insecure." Dr. Nowinski is telling us

that when a child is born into the world with a very sensitive or tender disposition, then all of the traumatic losses or even rejections which the child experiences when he or she is young or even in adolescence, will cause further damage and insecurity in the life of that individual person. Further on page 43, Dr. Nowinski says, "Ironically, the effects of childhood separation and loss, much like the effects of physical or emotional abuse or rejection, were once thought to pass more or less quickly, leaving children with no lasting emotional scars as an individual passed from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. This misconception may be one reason why insecurity has remained so poorly understood. In reality there is no basis in fact to believe that the effects of separation and trauma on children's hearts and souls is only fleeting, or that a wounded spirit or a broken heart heals either quickly or completely." In other words, folks, throughout our lives from the time we are children until we become adults, those negative and harmful things that happen to us cause greater insecurity and damage to our personal lives and relationships unless we resolve to get the help from Christian counselors or secure pastors and Christian workers to help us deal with our insecurity.

What I am saying is that if we are born with a very sensitive nature, then every time we suffer trauma caused by rejection by those we love, separation from those who provide us security, disapproval by those we are trying to please, and down right indifference from those we love and admire, then our security is going to be damaged in an enormous way. Thus, we become threatened by almost everyone we work with, jealous of those who are successful, and very paranoid around those who seem to have it all together. It is almost as if the insecure person resents the secure individual and wants that secure person to feel what he the insecure person feels, hurt the way he or she hurts, and even suffer greater tragedy than does the one who is insecure. What happens is that this insecure person never finds his or her personal identity, becomes extremely egocentric, selfish and self-centered, and seems to find more joy in the failure and suffering of other people in the same ministries and same organizations than he or she ever would in their own success. As some have said, "If this miserable person didn't have misery, he or she wouldn't be happy at all." The sad thing is that this miserable insecure person eventually ends up in total clinical depression with no hope or reason to live. Why? Just simply because he or she has never even admitted that there is an insecurity problem at all.

The Prevalent Characteristics Of Insecurity

We now come to the next main point about the insecurity of pastors and other church leaders. I am calling these "The Prevalent Characteristics Of Insecurity", but some have called these many characteristics "the signs of insecurity" in the lives of pastors and other church leaders. But regardless what we might call them, they are so very evident in the lives of those who are filled with insecurity. And, you might say they are the symptoms which help us diagnose the real disease. So, let's take a close look at several of these signs so that we might be able to identify the people that are truly insecure, and then do our best to help them if they will have a teachable spirit. Also, by being able to identify the signs of this

insecurity, maybe we can take the appropriate action to prevent people, churches, Christian organizations, and church leaders from being permanently damaged by these insecure leaders. Of course, our primary goal should always be redemption and restoration, but if this is refused, then the proper action must be taken to prevent further damage to the cause of Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel.

A Spirit Of Competitiveness!

I have discovered from several articles that I have read and also from my 50 years of ministry experience that one major sign of insecurity in a pastor or church leader is a spirit of competitiveness. Insecure pastors and other church leaders are usually very very competitive in every thing they do. They compete with other churches and ministries always trying to out do those whom they have come to believe are their opponents. They want to see larger attendance numbers regardless of what they have to do to get the larger numbers in their ministry, or if push comes to shove, they just simply exaggerate the numbers to try to make themselves look good.

Because of this spirit of competitiveness, these insecure leaders allow their insecurity to produce jealousy, strong criticism of others, and believe it or not, many times they become isolationists because they don't want to be out-spoken, out-classed, out-done, or out-achieved in any way. So, they withdraw from others they consider their equal and prefer to merely hang out with those peons who don't measure up and offer no threat to their insecurity.

A Spirit Of Combativeness!

The next character trait or sign of insecurity is that the insecure person usually demonstrates a spirit of combativeness. What I mean by this is that the insecure pastor or church leader seems to always be ready for an argument or verbal fight. This very insecure person has to always have the final word in any conversation, argument, or engagement. And, it has been my experience that this insecure person will do whatever is necessary to win the argument and be the last person standing because he or she must win or their insecurity will be even greater.

To illustrate this let me mention a good friend of mine that I have known all of my life. We even played together when we were both young. However, he never completed a formal education and because of this he has always had to prove to others that he is smart and can out do anyone in almost anything. Truthfully, he can do almost anything and do it well, but he must make sure that whatever he does is seen by others in order to get their applause or approval. If he doesn't accomplish this intended goal, then he becomes frustrated, angry, and if anyone tries to hold him accountable for anything, he literally blows up. Why? Because of insecurity.

In fact, after he got saved he started reading the Bible and it would seem for the wrong reason. He seems to study the Bible so he can out argue others and try to put them to shame because they haven't worked as hard as he in their studies. He has caused arguments in classes and helped to divide people on doctrine because of

his insecurity. I still love this man very much, but getting him to admit that he is insecure would take a supernatural act of God.

So, one of the obvious signs of insecurity in a pastor or other church leader is the combative spirit. Do you know any church leaders like this? I bet you do and if not, you will before very long. The sad result is that this type of individual causes friction and division in relationships, churches, ministries, and organizations all because he or she is insecure and somewhat childish in his or her behavior.

A Spirit Of Complaining!

The next sign of an insecure person is a spirit of complaining. One dear pastor, Dr. Ronnie Floyd, said in 2014, "Some of the whiniest people I know are ministers." (From an article in pastors.com, page 2. The article is entitled, "How to Keep Your Insecurity From Hurting Your Church"). These first three signs of insecurity are mentioned in Dr. Floyd's article. Therefore folks, we need to conclude that a pastor or church leader who complains all the time is usually a very insecure person. This person has the idea that he or she can always do things better than anyone else, so why allow others to mess something up when he or she can do it right. Thus, everyone else is always wrong and the insecure leader is always right. The idea is that he or she must tear down others in order to try to build themselves up. This complaining critical spirit will ultimately alienate others and drive them away from participating in or personally supporting whatever the project may be. So, almost no church or organization will continue to grow under the leadership of an insecure individual

The remaining signs of insecurity that I want to mention come from an article in "The Enrichment Journal", written by Dr. Samuel D. Rima. The following signs of insecurity are found on pages 4-5 of this article.

A Spirit Of Paranoia

I have already mentioned this point earlier in this article, but I want to quote what Dr. Rima has said about this. "Pastors who struggle with deep feelings of personal insecurity are often concerned that people in their churches might silently doubt their leadership ability. They then become paranoid that people are conspiring behind the scenes to undermine their leadership or certain projects they are promoting. As a result, these pastors have a difficult time allowing staff members or even parishioners to maintain a vital role because paranoid pastors are fearful that someone might lead a leadership coup. Thus, perceived dissenters must be removed, and often such removals are orchestrated through clandestine and hurtful means." Page 5.

Folks, while I was typing this note by Dr. Rima, I couldn't help but think about the scores of African leaders who have allowed their paranoia and insecurity cause them to do vicious things that usually leads to scores of people being murdered, disenfranchised, are run from their homeland. And yes having been in the ministry a long time, I must confess that I know numbers of people who have become alienated

from their churches by insecure pastors; many of which become insecure dictators who trust no one and will not allow anyone to disagree with them. As I read in another book one time which I can't remember now, someone said, "The landscape is literally covered with the ruined lives of people who have forsaken their churches and service to Christ because of insecure pastors and church leaders". May God help all of us as church leaders to get rid of our insecurity and get back to finding who we are in Jesus. Who I am is not dependent upon the approval of others. But, my identity is found in my intimate relationship with Christ. We must find who we are in order to get over the paranoia.

A Spirit Of Jealousy

Another prevalent sign of insecurity is that the insecure leader has a spirit of jealousy. Let's quote Dr. Rima's discussion of jealousy on page 5 of his article. "Another indicator that a pastor is struggling with insecurity is his jealous reactions toward other staff members. One pastor of a large church refused to allow any staff member to preach in his absence. Instead, he insisted that his Sunday sermon be videotaped and shown to the congregation on Sunday morning. This jealous reaction stemmed from a previous occasion when a staff member had preached in his absence and had received rave reviews for his sermon. Jealousy can also be related to a pastor's paranoia that people might like another staff member better than they like the pastor."

Folks, I have seen the rage of jealousy in many pastors down through my 50 plus years of ministry. Obviously, these pastors have avoided the passage of scripture in Proverbs describing jealousy. Pay attention to **Proverbs 6:34-35, "For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts."** In other words, jealousy is so terrible that no apology for wrong done and no gift of ransom or of peace will be accepted by the jealous person who is in a fit of rage.

I must tell you that many times I have seen insecure pastors who will not bring in any preacher to their pulpits who they think might be able to out preach them. They don't even want to be around these effective and fruitful preachers, because they feel that they will get more attention from the congregation than the pastor might get. They are so filled with jealousy that they would rather lost people die and go to hell from the pews of their churches than for some of their people to get gloriously saved under the preaching of another man of God.

Let me mention two illustrations of this very thing. One I was told about many years ago. Dr. Bailey Smith, who is still one of America's greatest evangelist is renown for his classic sermon on "The Wheat and The Tares". Wherever he preaches this sermon, scores of lost church members get saved. When this happens, some of the insecure pastors get angry because they feel that they have not been able to see these same church members get saved under their ministries. They falsely accuse Dr. Smith of preaching to just get numbers. But in fact, the problem is their insecure jealousy. Folks, I remember where one man of God, the pastor of a

large church, told Dr. Smith that he could not have him preach for him any more because when he preached the "Wheat and Tares" sermon, it made this well-known pastor look bad. Just imagine this insecure pastor standing before Jesus one day at the Judgment Seat of Christ and trying to explain how he was more concerned with his personal ego than he was the lost souls that would have gone to hell if Dr. Smith had not come to preach his sermon.

And, following in this same line, I remember preaching on Sunday morning in a good church here in North Carolina about six years ago which ran about 400 people. That morning, we had 25 people saved, most of them adults; some of which were in their seventies. The people were ecstatic and thrilled at what God had done, but the extremely insecure pastor took my wife and me out to lunch and prayed a prayer from a jealous heart at the lunch table telling God that He knew these people didn't come down just because I preached the sermon. In fact, he told God that I had just simply stirred up their emotions and some of these old people didn't really know what they were doing. Never in my life have I seen a more insecure preacher with a seminary degree and a heart full of jealousy. Today he is no longer pastoring, thank God!

A Spirit Of Compulsivity

Going back to Dr. Rima's listing, I want to once more quote from his article on the insecure pastor found on page 5 dealing with the signs of insecurity. "A pastor who is struggling with the feelings of insecurity may also exhibit compulsive behavior, such as giving special attention to his personal appearance and dress. To mask feelings of insecurity, the pastor may give an inordinate amount of attention to his outward appearance. Having immaculately pressed suits and well-cut hair that always seems to be perfectly in place can be an obsessive concern for the leader struggling with feelings of insecurity. By compulsively focusing on his appearance he is attempting to control the external aspect of his life to compensate for his inability to control the internal aspects. As a result, these leaders often spend excessive amounts of money and time in pursuing the clothes and grooming habits necessary to maintain an immaculate appearance."

"In addition, compulsive leaders frequently are perfectionists and extremely demanding of others. This is because they perceive everything in the organization to be a reflection of them personally. Thus, everything must be done to perfection. How long must a person work to ensure that everything is done to perfection? Forever! Absolute perfection is not attainable. But this is the reason many compulsives are workaholics who demand the same of others." (Page 5)

A Spirit Of Narcissism

Webster's Dictionary defines narcissism as egocentrism. This means that a person who is narcissitic is totally struck on himself or herself and only lives to promote and extoll his or her goodness. The last sign that Dr. Rima gives on page 5 of his article in "The Enrichment Journal" to reveal a true insecure pastor or other

Christian leader is narcissism. Let me give you the content of his article. "Although narcissism is most commonly manifested in a person's excessive self-admiration, self-centeredness, an overestimation of his own appearance—as well as a need for the expressed affirmation of others—these manifestations are, paradoxically, rooted in feelings of self-loathing, insecurity, inferiority, and vulnerability. For a narcissist, everything in life and ministry revolves around him—he needs to always be at the center of attention. The narcissist does not like to share attention or admiration with anyone. He will strive to keep other staff members out of public view so there are fewer opportunities for them to be noticed or appreciated. The narcissistic pastor is only too willing to accept praise for the work of other staff members who rightly deserve the praise because, he is the senior pastor who made it all possible. "

An Artificial Or Phony Demeanor

Now, I want to add one more sign of a truly insecure leader that doesn't come from Dr. Rima's list. And yet, I believe this character trait of the insecure pastor or church leader probably hurts the cause of Christ and the effectiveness of ministry more than any other. I say this because all across the United States and throughout the world where my wife and I have travelled, we have met so many phonies or artificial leaders that it is very scary. As a matter of fact, I could probably stop and list the names of numbers of these phonies that I have met and tried to bond with down through the years, but I will not do this. But, I must tell you that numbers and numbers of these artificial people stand out in my mind just as vivid as they were the day I met them, or even the weeks I tried to work with them during 50 years of ministry. The insecurity of these people causes these people to wear a mask and pretend to be church leaders they are not. Someone said, "An insecure pastor usually puts on a mask to seem spiritual and deep. He then refuses to be or seem common with everyday people because he strives to be worshiped, adored, and even feared by the membership. He depends upon his reputation for perfection to create an invisible barrier between him and his members. He has to make others feel less so he will feel important. His love and respect is artificial." And, if you don't believe he is a genuine phony, then try disagreeing with him on anything and his true colors will come out with bitterness, jealousy, disdain, disrespect, and many other negative responses. Therefore, the character trait that I hate and detest most in pastors and any church leaders is being phonies. The Bible calls these people hypocrites, and I call them obstacles to the building of the Kingdom. May God grant forgiving grace and mercy to these artificial "want-a bes".

We have now covered eight signs or characteristics of the insecure pastor or other church leader. Surely without any doubt, these eight items should reveal to us the obvious insecurity of any pastor or church leader. And if this insecure leader will open his or her eyes, he or she should be able to deal with this very serious issue which brings about so much hurt and heartache for both the guilty individual and to those with whom this insecure person works. Now what is important is that we move on to see the tragic consequences of insecurity out of control, we will then take a look at some Bible characters who were insecure and see how God helped

them in the midst of their insecurity. And for practical reasons, we will spend much time on the cure so that those entrapped in the bondage of insecurity may find a Biblical way out.

The Devastating Consequences Of Insecurity

Earlier in this thesis I mentioned some of the basic damages that are prevalent in a situation where there is a pastor or leader with deep insecurity. I mentioned that it eliminates a huge amount of opportunities for evangelism because it turns people off to the Gospel message. The insecurity of leaders also hinders any progress in ministry such as planting churches, expanding ministry projects, taking the Gospel to the world in missions, and even in working with other pastors or churches in evangelism projects, discipleship training, and in pastoral training. Thus, insecure people do irreparable damage to the progress of the Kingdom of God and most of all, to themselves and their families. It is obvious to me that when a pastor or church leader reaches a certain depth of insecurity, then that person becomes an obstacle to the very ministry he or she was called to perform. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be guilty of putting up a stop sign before the progress of the Kingdom of God because of my self-centered attitude, even if I were born with a sensitive temperament or disposition.

In continuing the thought about the devastating consequences of insecurity, I believe it would be extremely important to share a few more basic dysfunctional insecurity indicators so that the person who has insecurity and the people around this person can readily identify the insecurity in the person quickly so that action and correction can be taken before everything goes out of control and permanent damage is done.

Let me give you these indicators in a list. This list of indicators comes from an article written by Dr. Leslie E. Welk on the Assemblies of God website back in 2014. The article is entitled, "The Minister and the Plague Of Personal Insecurity", and the following list comes from page 1.

- *A profound sense of self-doubt.
- *Deep feelings of uncertainty about one's basic worth and place in the world.
- *Chronic self-consciousness, feeling as though all eyes are on you.
- *Chronic lack of self-confidence.
- *Anxiety about relationships
- *Fear and rejection, and misinterpreting the words and actions of others as such.
- *Uncertainty about the legitimacy of one's feelings and desires.
- *Cannot enjoy silence—unable to be alone with one's self regularly.
- *Excessive and inappropriate use of humor as a mask.
- * Self-promotion from an unhealthy need to be needed.
- *Bullying in relationships—overly authoritative.
- *Materialistic—an effort to prove one's values to others.

- *Irrational jealousy over the accomplishments and abilities of others.
- *A tendency to be hypercritical of yourself and others.
- *Abusive behaviors—physical, verbal, emotional.

Now that I have given you these dysfunctional insecurity indicators, when does insecurity become dysfunctional in a life or ministry? In the same article written by Leslie Welk on pages 2-3, the writer says, "When insecurity becomes so intense and lasting that it seriously undermines our self-esteem and interferes with our ability to enjoy life, to build and keep satisfying relationship, and to achieve our career potential, it is dysfunctional." Therefore my friends, it is truly time for us to discover if our insecurity is doing all of this damage, and if it is, then we need to do something about it immediately. We will tell you what to do just before we close this article.

Examples From The Bible Of Insecure Leaders

I sincerely love the Bible! I have been studying it for 59 years. I never get over the reality of those Bible characters who faced the many things we face in life today. The same can be said about individuals in the Bible who experienced insecurity and the damaging consequences of this insecurity.

David Was An Insecure Man

The first one that I will mention is David who wrote so many of the Psalms. In **Psalm 40**, the Bible tells us that David was down cast and pleading with God for help because he was in a state of despair and insecurity. The story of David will reveal in many of the Psalms where he was in a dramatic state of dismay and despair. Thus, he was insecure and without self-esteem or self-confidence. So, he cried out to God to destroy his enemies and come and restore his security. On and on we could go with one episode after another in David's life where his insecurity is revealed. But wonderful to say, with the help of God's grace, David always rebounded and was brought once again to confidence in the Lord and also in his own ability.

Moses Was An Insecure Man

Another person in the Bible that really demonstrated much insecurity was Moses. Because Moses believed he lacked oratory skills, he became so overcome by insecurity that he tried to defer God's call to lead Israel to someone else. Pay attention to what the Bible says in **Exodus 4:10,13, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue. O Lord, please send someone else to do it."** Can you see the lack of confidence and self-esteem in what Moses said? He was fearful, felt inadequate, felt unequipped, and he just did not trust God to go with him and help him with his call to tell Pharaoh to let the people of God leave bondage. You know the rest of the story. God told Moses that Aaron could go with him and be his

speaker. God ultimately helped Moses, and He provided the strength and ability for Moses to do what He had called him to do. God is still willing to do this for all pastors and church leaders today, but these leaders must have a teachable spirit and respond by faith if the work is to get done. As Zechariah tells us in **Zechariah 4:6**, it is not by might nor by man's power but by the Spirit of God that His work must be done. It must be done in and through the power of the Holy Spirit. You see folks, our efforts must be done through God's power and not just by man's confidence and abilities.

Gideon Was An Insecure Man

God summoned Gideon to become a judge over Israel. But his family background, as well as his own position within his family, became a point of insecurity. Please notice what Gideon said to the Lord: **"But Lord, Gideon asked, how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family". (Judges 6:15)** Do you see the lack of confidence and insecurity of Gideon when he was called by God to do a great service for Israel? I do, and I think this is very characteristic of leaders who feel somewhat unworthy and even fearful when they have been given a job by God that will cause them to get outside of the box and as Jabez said, expand their territory. And, I think we should understand there is a world of difference between just feeling unworthy and humble as opposed to being so insecure that we are frozen where we are, rather than moving on to greater things and greater ministries because of genuine insecurity. Gideon was insecure, but God showed him that he could accomplish whatever God wanted him to if he would depend upon the power of God and carry out the plan God's way. We all need to understand that we will never be successful in the work of God, if we try to do God's will our way!

The Apostle Paul Was Somewhat Insecure

I love the Apostle Paul. In fact, I had the privilege of writing my Master's Degree on "The Evangelism Pattern Of Paul The Apostle". I must tell you that during the year that I worked diligently on my thesis, I fell truly in love with this dynamic man of God. Yet during my study I came to understand that in spite of the fact that God used Paul mightily, he did have some tremendous flaws, and he was the first to admit this. In **II Corinthians 2:16**, pay attention to what Paul said: **"To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"** In this last phrase, Paul reveals how insufficient he feels. Thus, Paul is revealing how insecure and inadequate he felt. Then near the end of Paul's life while he was in prison he made the following statement. He said, **"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."** (**Philippians 3:12**) In this verse we still sense that Paul knows he has not matured the way he wants to, but he is willing to turn his inadequacy over to Jesus and let Him provide what he needed to keep on pressing on toward the finish line.

Folks, do you see that it is quite alright to have insecurity and admit it, but you cannot allow your insecurity to hold you in the bondage of fear until you fail to reach God's potential in your life. Paul was insecure which is revealed in many places in his writings, but he refused to let his insecurity control his life or drive him to a point of self-centeredness or become egocentric. Paul had a success story when it came to overcoming his insecurity, and so can we if we will commit our insecurity to Jesus Christ and realize our personal identity in Christ.

King Saul Committed Suicide Because Of His Insecurity

Now, let me mention King Saul who was probably the most insecure leader that you will find anywhere in the Bible. You can find his story in **I Samuel Chapters 8-31**. Saul started out as a great leader for Israel but he just gradually got worse and worse with personal insecurity. He became so insecure that he was extremely jealous of David and anyone else that he considered to be a threat to his kingdom. He even attempted to kill David three times but he failed. David responded with kindness to him because Saul was the anointed of God. Yet with David's reciprocated kindness, Saul still was angry with David and he continued to demonstrate jealousy, paranoia, and bitterness until one day in battle he was wounded, and it was then that he fell on his own sword and killed himself. Every time I think of Saul, I just want to say that this man's insecurity and jealousy destroyed every potential for him to become a great servant of God, and this man's insecure behavior damaged and hurt so many relationships with other people around him. Dr. Leslie Welk has said, "Because of his insecurity, Saul became paranoid, abandoned his trusted relationship with David, threatened David's life, consulted with a witch for guidance instead of God, and failed the people of Israel leading them into near destruction. Saul's failure to deal with his insecurity, among other spiritual and other emotional issues, ultimately caused him to take his own life." What a tragedy of major proportion! And yet, everywhere I go today as a man of God, I see scores of professing Christian leaders conducting themselves a lot like King Saul and destroying their ministries and their relationships with those around them. Truthfully, one of these insecure pastors that I knew well came to my office for some comfort, only to snap and kill himself a few months later. As I look back now, I just simply regret that I didn't help him diagnose his own insecurity. Had I done this and if he would have had a teachable spirit, he may still be alive today.

By now after you have read all that I have written up to this point, I hope we might agree that genuine insecurity in the life of a minister, pastor, or any church leader is a horrible thing because of the damage it does. Dr. John Maxwell in his book entitled, "The 21 Indispensable Qualities Of A Leader", on page 121, makes the following statement. He says: "Insecure leaders are dangerous—to themselves, their followers, and the organizations they lead—because a leadership position amplifies personal flaws. Whatever negative baggage you have in life only gets more difficult to bear when you're trying to lead others". May I say how true Dr. Maxwell's statement is. I know this experientially because many years ago when I started out in the ministry, I had much insecurity. But, with the help of Jesus and with the

friendship of a good number of very secure pastors, I was able to overcome most of my insecurities and move on with my life and ministry. I hope this material will help you to do the same. But, let me say one more time. If you are insecure and you don't have a teachable spirit, you will never get the victory over your insecurity. Now, let's take the next step and learn some practical steps to overcome insecurity.

The Practical Cure For Insecurity

How does an insecure pastor or church leader overcome his or her problem and begin to live a secure and fruitful life? Well, I am going to share several things that I feel must be done in order to become victorious over insecurity. And I want to add that the things I am going to list in this cure for insecurity are given in the order that I believe they must be carried out. I do hope that if you are reading this thesis and have discovered that you have insecurity as a major problem in your life that you will implement the following suggested steps to overcome your insecurity. The first seven things that I am going to give you are some honest suggestions which I have discovered that must be done down through my many years of ministry. The last four steps that I provide will be from another dear pastor who has dealt extensively with the subject of this article. So, I ask you to read the following steps and begin to devotedly apply them to your life. And, if these things prove to be helpful to bring you to victory in your struggle with insecurity, I would love for you to contact me by letter or e-mail so that I can rejoice together with you. I promise you that I will spend much time in prayer for you as you rebuild your life and ministry. Now to the steps!

You Must Know For Sure That You Are Saved!

You probably think that I have lost my mind when I tell you that the first thing you must do in order to conquer your insecurity is that you must know for sure that you are saved. The reason I believe this is the place to start is that we live in a day that a lot of young people and even older adult men and women choose to become pastors, teachers, missionaries, etc. just because they think it might be a good and worthwhile vocation. Thus, I am convinced that a lot of people in pastorates and in other church leadership positions have never even been saved. They do not know for sure that Jesus lives in their hearts, and therefore how can they tell others honestly about how to come to Christ. This is why I say that much damage is being done in our churches and Christian communities by pastors and church leaders who are not genuinely saved. So, I want to encourage every one of you church leaders to stop and make sure that you have sincerely been saved, and that Christ lives in your heart. There is no way on earth that you can ever find your personal identity and live a life of security until you get genuinely saved. If you really are not saved, let me encourage you to go to our Gateway International Missions web site and there you will find God's Plan of Salvation to help you come to Christ. This would be a good place for you to start this recovery program from

insecurity. Just go to: gatewayinternationalmissions.com and there you will find how to get saved!

You Must Know For Sure You Are Called By God To Your Position

The second step to finding victory over insecurity as a pastor or church leader is that you must know without a doubt that God has called you to be in the position of a pastor or other church leader. This step may also sound ridiculous, but truthfully, there are scores and scores of people around the world who are trying to do ministries, and lead churches and Christian organizations that have never been called by God to these roles. Therefore, probably the most miserable human being on earth is a person who is trying to fill a role in Christian service to where he has never been called. Look at the following verses. **"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen: immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."** Galatians 1:15-17. Paul is saying in these verses that when God called him to get saved and start his ministry to the heathen, the first thing he did was to go into the desert and spend years there settling for sure the call of God upon his life. When he returned from the Arabian desert, there was no question that he was a God-called man. This should be the mantra of every pastor and church leader. No Christian leader can be secure without the affirmation of his or her calling.

Again in **Romans 11:29**, we find these words, **"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."** Folks, do you see what this verse is saying? In this verse Paul is telling us that when God gives gifts to His people and calls them to His service, he doesn't change His mind and take back the gifts or call. So, any pastor or other Christian leader must know for sure that God has called him before he will ever be secure in the role of service. And although I don't believe the Bible teaches that women can be pastors, I do believe that God calls women to serve in many full-time positions in relationship to His church and worldwide missions and evangelism. Therefore, whether a male pastor or a female missionary, the call of God must be known by the individual before the person will ever feel comfortable or secure in his or her role.

You Must Also Be Ready To Allow A Personal Evaluation Of Your Security!

The next practical suggestion that I want to make to help the insecure leader overcome his or her insecurity is that you must allow a trusted friend or colleague to openly and honestly evaluate your life and show you the insecure areas if you are ever going to overcome your battle. This means that you must be willing to receive some constructive criticism without getting angry and arguing or fighting back. This demands that you must have a teachable spirit and resolve in your heart that you will accept the criticism of your situation without rebelling, withdrawing, or denying the truth that is given to you. This step in your recovery process is tremendously

important. It is so important that you will probably never overcome the insecurity in your life unless you can and will tolerate the truth about yourself. But, if you do receive the information positively, you will probably be on your way to victory.

You Must Be Willing To Confess Your Flaws And Sins That God And Others Might Show You

We now come to the next suggestion to help you get on the road to complete recovery from your insecurity. This step is that when God and others point out some flaws or sins in your life that you must be willing to honestly confess them to God, and if in the process of improper behavior toward others because of your insecurity, you need to apologize to those you have wronged or hurt. The idea is that you must be free from the bondage of sin and from the responsibility of bringing hurt to others if you are going to get out of insecurity. So, take a look at the following scriptures to help you with this step in the process. **I John 1:9** says, "**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**" Also, look at this passage. **James 5:16-** "**Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**" In other words folks, if we have wronged someone, then it is our responsibility to go to that person and ask for his or her forgiveness. When this happens, the recovering insecure person will be able to have reconciliation with the hurt person and find healing in the relationship and also healing for one's self. Then, we are told that instead of gossiping and complaining about that person that may have made us feel more insecure, we should pray for that person. Also, it would be wonderful to ask that person to pray for us.

I think I should add right here that we will never be able to right the wrong we have done to others by our insecurity within our homes or within our churches, unless we quit feeling sorry for ourselves. It has been my personal experience having gone through clinical depression that self-pity is the greatest cause of depression. So, if we wallow in our self-pity, we will not confess our sins and flaws, and we will not attempt to right the wrong with others. Why is this true? Because self-pity focuses on us and our selfishness which causes us to go on blaming others. And I can assure you that as long as we feel sorry for ourselves, we will not have a teachable spirit which is mandatory to recovering from insecurity.

You Need To Find Out What Kind Of Temperament You Have!

This next suggestion that I want to give to help you get out of insecurity is to ask you to seriously consider making the effort to discover what actual temperament or temperaments you received at the moment of your conception genetically. In other words, read Dr. Tim LaHaye's book on "The Spirit-Controlled Temperament", or some other authoritative material on how to discern your temperament or disposition. In Dr. LaHaye's book there is a test you can take to discover which one or maybe more you were given when you were formed in the

womb of your mother. And once you discover which main one you have, then you need to seek God's guidance and possibly the guidance of a trusted Christian friend to help you modify your temperament in and through the Holy Spirit and with the study of God's Word if your temperament is a very sensitive one. Just please remember that if you are born with a very sensitive temperament and then you suffer some traumatic events in your life, you are prone to become extremely over sensitive and deeply insecure. You must find out what your main temperament is and then proceed to let Jesus hone it with His Spirit and His Word.

You Need To Start Showing Appreciation To Others Rather Than Seeking It!

Although I don't know who said it, I do remember a statement that every person needs to learn. That statement says, "That the worst thing you can ever do to a depressed person is to place your disapproval upon them." May I say that this is also very true for the insecure person. When we disapprove them or what they are doing or have done, you drive them deeper into the valley of despair. This is why so many pastors and other Christian leaders go out of their way to please others and seek their approval. Disapproval is cataclysmic to the insecure person. This is especially true if this insecure person has grown up with a lot of rejection and separation from those who provided warmth and protection.

Therefore, in order to continue to the process of complete recovery from insecurity, you must start offering to others the appreciation that you would ordinarily demand for yourself. Thus, the thought of the other person becomes more important than the thought of one's self. Let me say: STOP SEEKING ATTENTION AND PRAISE AND BEGIN GIVING IT TO GOD AND OTHERS! It is almost impossible to think negative thoughts about others if you constantly express gratitude and thanksgiving to them for a job well done. Just remember, if no one ever shows any appreciation to you for who you are and what you do, God is keeping a record of it all if your motives are right in your service. God never forgets anything!

You Need To Be At Peace With Who You Are In Relationship With Christ!

When a person gets saved and comes to Christ, that person is given a peaceful standing with God. This is accomplished by God with the act of justification. However, if this saved person is to have the peace of God with self and others, this requires the individual to recognize who he or she is in Christ and claim the benefits and joys of this unique relationship. Please glean the great truth from these next verses. **"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to**

them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Ephesians 2:14-18. In other words, folks, if we have peace with God, then we should have peace with self and with others knowing that our identity is with Christ. And because of this, we should have great security.

Further Help With Dealing With Security!

Having given you seven suggestions for overcoming insecurity in your life, I want to now give you verbatim what Dr. Samuel D. Rima says about how to get out of the darkness of insecurity. This is found on pages 6-7 of an article he wrote a few years back on "Insecure Pastors", in the "Enrichment Journal". Please pay much attention to the next several paragraphs.

"What can a pastor do if he begins to sense that some of these symptoms of insecurity might be descriptive of his life or leadership? How might lay leaders in a church approach a pastor who seems unaware of the destructive dynamics of his personal insecurity? Let me suggest a few basic steps one might take to deal with this dark side of leadership."

1. "The first step out of this darkness is recognizing the problem and owning it. As long as everyone allows the insecure pastor to live in denial, nothing will ever change--except for the worse. The insecure pastor must be willing to identify the problem, recognize the behaviors in which he is engaged in an effort to compensate for his feelings of insecurity, and then own the problem. This is the primary prerequisite for bringing about change."

2. "In the second step, the insecure pastor must discover and explore the roots of his feelings of insecurity. He must take time to explore and examine the past. This can be an emotionally painful process, which is why leaders avoid it and engage in compensating behaviors. Because this process can be complex and painful, I recommend engaging the services of a spiritual director, counselor, Christian psychologist, or therapist. It is vital that the pastor take this step and pursue it until he has attained the necessary learning, understanding, and personal growth needed to lead him out of the darkness of denial and self-deception and into the light of God's grace."

3. "The third step out of the darkness is recognizing that the power of Christ can be perfected in a personal weakness (**2 Corinthians 12:9**). When we recognize our weaknesses, embrace them as a part of wholeness, and bring them out of the shadows of our lives so God can redeem them, we eliminate their controlling effects in our lives."

4. "The fourth step is finding our true identity in Christ. The previous three steps will be difficult if not impossible to take if a pastor does not understand his true identity in Christ. He must understand that God loves him completely as he is--even with his dysfunctions--and that God has allowed these to exist in his life so He can facilitate spiritual growth toward wholeness. In Christ, believers are holy and blameless. This is our spiritual position. But believers do not always live out the wholeness Christ made possible because of dysfunctions that result from sin. However, when people fully embrace who they are in Christ, they are provided with

the confidence to process their dysfunction(s) in emotional safety. They can then integrate their dysfunctions into their lives, rather than continue to hide them in the shadow side of their personality because of their shame."

"For the insecure pastor who has learned to mask or hide his insecurities and compensate for them in unhealthy ways, there is hope and the real possibility of becoming whole in Christ and allowing his dysfunctions to become the rich spiritual soil from which his most effective ministry might come. May God help pastors to live and lead from places of wholeness and freedom, rather than guilt and shame."

Conclusion

We now come to the conclusion of this long written presentation on "**The Modern Tragedy Of Insecure Pastors and Church Leaders**". It is truly my prayer that every insecure pastor or church leader may have paid close attention to the content of this material. Why do I say this? Because I am sincerely concerned about the enormous damage that is being done in our churches and other Christian ministries and organizations throughout America and the entire rest of the world. Time here on earth is so short and Jesus is coming back very soon. Therefore, won't you please agree with me that we need to be urgently busy with telling the lost world about Jesus and the Gospel message which includes the fact that He is coming again. Folks, there is no way that we can do this if our churches and ministries are fighting within because of the insecure pastors and church leaders.

And, will you just stop for a moment and see the terrible testimony that the damage in the churches and other ministries are portraying? We don't have the time to be divided, fight among ourselves, throw stones at one another, and freeze the Great Commission when an estimated 80,000 people die lost without Christ every 24 hours. Do you not understand that this equals over 30 million people every year that plunge into a literal burning hell from where there is no return? So, brother pastors and church leaders, I would beg you to deal with any of these insecurity issues that you have and get over it, and let's go on taking the Gospel to the world. It does not matter who gets the thanks, applause, and appreciation just as long as Jesus gets the glory. We will receive whatever rewards we have earned when we get to heaven. So, let's stop trying to get them here. The best is yet to come, and I believe it will be very soon.

One final note! If you have been changed and accomplished victory over your insecurity with the help of this material. I would like to know about it so that our ministry can pray for you and rejoice in your recovery. And hopefully, provide other materials for our dears brothers and sisters in the ministry and leadership of our churches and ministries. If God has used it to help you conquer your insecurity, would you please write me at: Gateway International Missions, Inc., P.O. Box 667, Taylorsville, NC 28681, or drop me an e-mail at gimi@charter.net.

