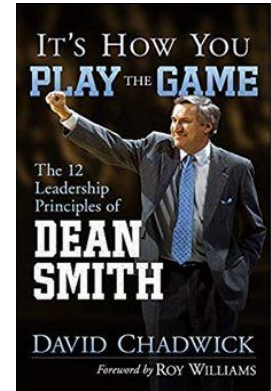


It's How You Play the Game – Part III

Leadership Principle 11 - Know Who Really is in Control: Winston Churchill gave a graduation speech at his former school. He said, “Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never.” There was a loud applause for Churchill’s motivational comment. Coach Smith looked at it differently. Smith said, “There have been many times in life when I’ve had to give in and give the matter to God. There are times when you need to quit trying and realize that, ultimately, you are not in control.” Catherine Marshall wrote in her book, *Beyond Ourselves*, “Crisis brings us face to face with our inadequacy and our inadequacy in turn leads us to the inexhaustible sufficiency of God.” Dean Smith echoed that thought when he said, “Helplessness is actually one of the greatest assets a human being can have...Key men need to learn who really holds the keys.” While we can draw our strength from the Lord we don’t need to do it by ourselves. How about you? Do you fight solo against struggles when, if you give the matter over to God, you can live in peace and God will make something good from it?



We have all heard the first part of the Serenity Prayer, but most of us haven’t heard the critical second part. The full prayer was at the seat of everyone who attended Dean Smith’s private memorial service. It read:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.
Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.
Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.
Amen.

Smith concluded, “If you can’t do something about a problem, it’s a fact of life. So accept the things we cannot change.” (Read Proverbs 16:9 and 19:21).

Leadership Principle 12 - Commit Yourself for the Long Haul: Some successful basketball coaches have many wins to their credit but jump from school to school for a better deal. They may coach at three or four different schools in their career. Dean Smith coached for 36 years, all at Carolina. He took a weak program and made it a success by maintaining Christian principles over an extended period of time. The wins were not as important to him as helping the people grow. Life is not a sprint but a marathon. Smith was committed to the important core values that came from his faith in Jesus Christ. During that marathon he coached not only for the current team but also for the next generation and the next. He trained leaders for generations to come. Jesus trained His disciples to carry forth the ministry beyond the time when He would walk among us. The result is that the Christian faith is with us for the long haul.

Conclusion: This three part devotional series is packed with wisdom exhibited by Coach Dean Smith. His was a wisdom anchored by his faith. Without a doubt Smith’s role model was Jesus Christ. Following the teachings of Jesus and the wisdom of the Bible, Smith established a culture that put people ahead of wins, the team ahead of individual achievement and personal character first. To promote the opportunity for players to grow in their own

faith Smith required players to attend church, did the Lord's Prayer immediately before a game and often used Bible verses as a thought for the day that was printed at the top of the daily practice play. Players had to be ready to recite the thought for the day from the practice plan.

Smith planned his own private memorial service for close friends, family and former players. He selected New Testament lessons 1 Corinthians 13, Matthew 25:31-46, and James 2:26 as important passages that guided his life. If you were to pick important bible verses what would you choose? Success is not just accomplishments but "How you play the game" as an example for others to follow.

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord. We trust you with our life. We pray that we will surrender our life to you so that we can live in peace forever. Amen.

This is the third of a 3-part series on Christian leadership. The traits described are exhibited by Dean Smith, the former University of North Carolina basketball coach. In this series he is just a recognizable example of a person who exhibits traits of Christian leadership that are also observed in other Christian leaders. Dean Smith's Christian attributes are described by Rev. David Chadwick, in the book "It's How You Play the Game". Chadwick played for Coach Smith and is now pastor of a large church in Charlotte, NC. As a side note, I am impressed with the post-basketball careers of many of his players. Coach Dean Smith was successful in preparing his players for life.