

# Christian Leadership

*By Dr. Craig Loving*

Christian leadership, if done right, is hard work. There will be occasions when the church wildly celebrates the pastor's leadership.

There will also be occasions - perhaps much longer seasons - in which it seems that the pastor's every word or action is challenged by those who follow. Sometimes opposition comes through the front door: *"We don't like the way you're doing things around here! We're changing directions!"* Sometimes it comes through the back door. More than once the enthusiast says, *"Tell us what you want to do, Pastor, and we'll find a way to make it happen"* has been followed with a carefully worded, *"We the undersigned..."*

In whatever way the challenge comes, the pastor has two essential obligations. **First, if he truly has God's vision for the future, he must maintain the primacy of that vision in the face of opposition.**

However, **the second obligation of leadership under fire is equally essential: self-restraint while responding to the opposition.** If the vision is truly God's vision, the challenge may not be against the leader, but against God. The more that a leader personalizes the vision, there is a greater danger that he will over-react to opposition.

If this happens, the consequences can be enormous. It seems to be a principle in God's economy that the greater the task of leadership is not maintaining the vision at all cost as it is the leader maintaining a right character (think of Moses).

In times of opposition, more than his tenacity in holding onto the vision, it is the self-restraint of the leader - his character - that is the decisive factor of leadership. When we exercise such self-control, we acknowledge that any true vision is God's vision, and its fulfillment is God's responsibility. When we exercise self-control under the power of the Holy Spirit, we manifest the character of spirit that ultimately qualifies us for leadership.

**Dr. Craig Loving is a counselor in practice in the Denver area.  
You can email him at [drCraigLoving@gmail.com](mailto:drCraigLoving@gmail.com)**