

Dealing With Our Insecurities

By Dr. Greg Wiens

I was recently talking with one of our pastors on the phone when he said that all of us have insecurities, and I agreed. However, not all insecurities are created equal! There are two extremes to insecurities: on one extreme, our insecurities become opportunities for us to develop humility, transparency, authenticity and strength. On the other hand, these same transparencies have literally ruined great ministers and ministries. What is the difference between both of these extremes?

It is NOT the type of insecurities that each extreme has. We all have 'issues' which spring out of our upbringings or other factors in our lives. We see an example in the scriptures when you read about David's life. David was the youngest of seven brothers and seldom got the respect he deserved. When Samuel came to anoint the next king of Israel, his father brought every son before Samuel without even thinking of David who was out with the sheep. David's own brothers told him to go away quietly so he would not embarrass them before Goliath...David simply couldn't get respect.

We all of us have insecurities, including myself. But the difference between them being building blocks for our integrity and destroying our ministry is what we do with them. Insecurities can become opportunities for growth when they are first acknowledged. Often many church leaders simply are ignorant of their own insecurities, which sets them up for failure. Sometimes they may be afraid to acknowledge their issues for fear of what others might think. I am not suggesting that we broadcast them in the newsletter, but I am suggesting that you need to find a group of committed friends who can speak into your life in this area and you can be free to acknowledge.

So, what might be some ways that these insecurities are manifested? They usually take the form of fears. Here are some potential underlying insecurities:

- Fear of Failure
- Fear of others looking better
- Fear of others not liking you
- Fear of others not thinking your very good
- Fear of others being better than you
- Fear of being wrong

These fears are often seen as:

- Not trusting others
- Micro managing
- Being critical of others (successes and failures)
- Continual pointing to your own successes
- Refusing to admit when you are wrong
- Refusing to see you are wrong

- Working hard to prove how good you are
- Not being willing to confront...and the list goes on

Most of these behaviors aren't usually seen by the person demonstrating them nearly as quickly as people seeing them. That is why the first step in taking the poison out of insecurities is coming clean with them through some trusted friends who will help you see them. Personally, there are five other guys who have the ability to speak into my life at this level. I meet with them on an annual basis and several of them see me in ministry settings just about every week, so they can surely help me identify such unhealthy behaviors.

Once you are aware of your insecurities and how they are manifested in your ministry, it is important to ask for some help in dealing with them. Elsewhere I have written of the importance of a coach or someone who can literally help you be more effective than you would otherwise be by yourself. This coach is different from your close group of friends in that he/she is more skilled, experienced and equipped to speak corrective truth into your life. As you identify inappropriate behaviors, the coach can often help you see the underlying insecurity that is causing it. Personally, I have had a number of coaches in my life, and presently Al Ells serves as such.

Sometimes you will need to pay someone for this kind of help. There is nothing embarrassing about this; every great athlete has a coach that has helped him/her to excel. Is the ministry and life more important than sports? We offer free coaching to pastors in Florida Church of God Ministries because I believe that one of the reasons why we exist is to coach pastors to lead churches in transforming the spiritual landscape of their communities.

The third step in keeping your insecurities from ship wrecking your life and ministry is to see accountability from those closest to you. I believe this can be very effective if you have a few members of your board who are willing and capable of doing so. The leadership accountability model (adapted Governance model) that we train in is wonderfully equipped to provide the board with the tools for such. This can be very risky if you don't have a trusting relationship with your board, so in that case you may need to ask another person(s) to help.

But for accountability to work, it must be in a loving and trusting environment where there is a close proximity (so you can actually see how the person is relating to others) and the ability to speak the truth. For me (and most of the rest of us), true life-change in the area of our insecurities doesn't come from simply admitting and knowing how to change, but rather through someone holding us accountable over a longer period of time.

The final stage in cementing these changes in our lives occurs through encouragement that can also come through these friends, coaching and accountability relationships.

1. Acknowledge your insecurities
2. Ask a coach for help in dealing with them
3. Accountability is the key for stability
4. Encouragement keeps us growing

As I have watched leaders walk through these four kinds of relationships in their lives, I have seen many insecurities turn into building blocks for healthy ministry. None of these steps are easy, but they can produce eternal fruit beyond description.