

FOUR O'S OF LEADERSHIP

RESILIENT LEADERSHIP

*If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you.
He will not rebuke you for asking.*

– JAMES 1:5

Too many people are not thriving in life. They are barely surviving and are unable to finish what they start. I remember what my professor said during my freshman year in college: “Look to your left and to your right, only one of you will be here in four years.” Thinking it was only a scare tactic, I realized the truth in what he said when my two freshman roommates didn’t make it to their second semester because of poor decisions! The same is true about life; too many people are not living well and not ending well. Personally, I have seen too many great, talented leaders crash and burn because of lack of wisdom and poor decision making.

Every day, we experience 4 O’s when we face decisions as leaders: **Opportunity, Opposition, Obedience, and Outcome**. When we truly understand these 4 O’s, we can lead courageously despite the circumstances.

1. **Where do Opportunities come from?** Yes, God has gifted us as leaders with great abilities and strengths, and we have even worked to get opportunities. However, it is important for us to realize that God orchestrates and provides all opportunities. All opportunities come from Him alone. He will use us, but opportunities are God’s part, not ours. Once we accept this truth, pressure and stress is replaced with peace and patience.
2. **Opposition will always come!** Every opportunity will be followed with opposition. We have three main enemies that give us opposition: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Each one has a goal to prevent us from succeeding. Paul seems to see it that way and even expects it. In 1 Corinthians 16:8-9, Paul writes, *“But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.”*

Oftentimes, we equate the moving of God with blessing, easy roads and clear sailing. When things don’t go well, we question ourselves and God Did I make a mistake? Did I hear God correctly? Did I take the wrong opportunity? But clear sailing is not the kind of open door we often experience, is it? Walking in step with the Holy Spirit is often just the opposite! With every opportunity, opposition will come!

3. **Obedience is simply saying, “Yes, God!”** When the going gets tough, the tough start obeying! In Joshua 1:9 we read, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Sometimes we shy away from an open door of opportunity because we can see the opposition. Could God be leading you into an opportunity that requires courage? Or an opportunity that requires obedience that confounds common sense? That sounds like a God-sized opportunity to me! Instead of leaning away, we need to lean in—that’s when obedience kicks in.

God is not looking for nibblers of the possible, but the grabbers of the impossible.
– C.T. STUDD

We need to seize the God-sized opportunities that require God-sized courage that only He can give! Courageous living requires obedience to walk with the Spirit through the open doors of opportunity, even in the face of opposition. Remember, obedience is our part!

4. **Outcomes are God’s part, not ours.** It is the God of the Universe who is responsible for how things turn out. When we are obedient, we can rest in His results. In Mark 4:27-28, we read about the Parable of the Growing Seed and are reminded that while the farmer is asleep or awake, the seed sprouts and grows on its own. There is peace when we know that the Lord of the Harvest is taking care of the outcome. One of my favorite verses is Galatians 6:9: “*So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.*” The harvest is coming!

Are we expecting God to open doors of **Opportunities**? Let’s not shrink back when the **Opposition** comes! Let’s be courageous and walk in courageous **Obedience** — step for step with the Holy Spirit. Then we can trust the Lord for the **Outcomes**.

- Q.** How do you view opportunities? Do you agree they all come from God?
- Q.** What opposition do you face in your leadership?
- Q.** What is the source of your courage? Why is courage necessary for obedience?
- Q.** As a leader, is it hard to recognize that God takes care of all the outcomes? Why or why not?
- Q.** What scripture comes to mind as you consider these four O’s?

Prayer

Father, I ask for wisdom, discernment, and understating. Help me to realize that all things come from You alone. You are so good, generous, and gracious. When the opposition comes, help me to keep my eyes fixed on You. Give me God-sized courage to obey. Finally, I will celebrate the outcome – no matter what. Thank you, Lord. In Jesus’ name, amen.