



3

Be Before You Do

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

- A person who practices “being” before “doing” operates from a place of emotional and spiritual fullness, deeply aware of themselves and others. As a result, their being with God is sufficient to sustain their doing for God.
- *Emotional fullness* is evidenced in disciples and leaders as a high level of awareness—of their feelings, weaknesses and limits, how their past impacts their present, and how others experience them. *Spiritual fullness* is evidenced as a healthy balance between being with God and doing for God.
- Healthy Christian disciples and leaders recognize that their presence—with God, themselves, and others—is their greatest gift and contribution to those they lead.
- Three statements summarize the be-before-you-do approach to ministry:
 - You cannot give what you do not possess.
 - What you do is important, but who you are is even more important.
 - The state you are in is the state you give to others.
- The core challenge that makes *being before doing* so difficult is that it forces us to come face-to-face with our false self.
- Characteristic external behaviors of the false self include self-protection, possessiveness, manipulation, self-promotion, and a need to distinguish ourselves from others.

DISCUSSION

1. What stood out most to you from this chapter on “Be Before You Do”?

- 2.** The chapter opens with two versions of a typical morning for a leader named Carlos—Carlos the *doing* leader and Carlos the *being* leader.
- What did you find most intriguing about the differences between Carlos the *doing* leader and Carlos the *being* leader?
 - Which aspects of Carlos the *doing* leader do you relate to most? Which aspects of Carlos the *being* leader do you aspire to most? Briefly share why.
- 3.** A person who practices “being” before “doing” operates from a place of emotional and spiritual fullness, deeply aware of themselves and others. As a result, their *being with* God is sufficient to sustain their *doing for* God. Who do you know that embodies this description? How do this person’s words, actions, and presence convey emotional and spiritual fullness?
- 4.** Healthy Christian disciples and leaders recognize that their presence—with God, themselves, and others—is their greatest gift and contribution to those they lead.
- If it’s true that the state you are in is the state you give to others, how would you characterize the state you gave to others over the last twenty-four hours?
 - What contribution did your presence make specifically to those you lead?
 - What comes to mind in response to the question, “Do I really want people to imitate the way I am living?”
- 5.** Briefly review the following definitions of false self and true self:

The *false self* is not a bad or deceitful self so much as a construct of externals—everything from appearance and education to talents and success—that we use to both protect ourselves and to bolster our sense of self-worth.

The *true self* is “your total self as you were created by God . . . the unique face of God that has been set aside from eternity for you.”^{1*}

- The author shared the story of a pastor named Craig whose false self revolved around a subconscious question, “What do these people need me to be so we can relate together?” If your false self were to take the form of a question, what might it be? What question(s) are you subconsciously asking when you walk into a room?

¹ * David Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 91.

- The false self can be difficult to identify but some of the characteristic external behaviors of the false self include self-protection, possessiveness, manipulation, self-promotion, and a need to distinguish ourselves from others. If you had to explain the false self to someone else using an example from your own life, what would it be?
 - In the book, one of the statements on the false self assessment (pages 47–48) is, “My sense of worth/well-being comes from what I have (possessions), what I do (accomplishments), or what others think of me (popularity).” What material possession, if you were to lose it, would cause you to lose a sense of worth and well-being? Similarly, what accomplishments and aspect of your popularity (reputation), if lost, would most diminish your sense of worth and well-being?
6. What challenges make it difficult for you *to be before you do*—to slow down your life to be with God, to care for yourself, to be with loved ones, to have integrity in the way you lead others?

READING ASSIGNMENT



Before your next meeting, read Chapter 4, “Follow the Crucified, Not the Americanized, Jesus.” Between now and then, pay attention to any ways in which you find yourself adjusting what you say or do in order to make a more favorable impression.

GOING DEEPER

- Watch *Breathe: Being with God in Silence*, a fifteen-minute guided reflection. Access the video at <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/silence/?v=4096ee8eef7d#silence-video>. Before starting the video, find a quiet and comfortable place to sit that is free of potential distractions. Depending on the device you use to watch the video, silence apps (such as email and text notifications) and place any gadgets out of sight. Keep your hands and lap empty. There is no need to take notes. Simply relax and allow yourself to be led.
- Listen to one or more of the following the Emotionally Healthy Leadership podcast episodes:
 - “Why You Need More than a Quiet Time, Part 1,” accessible at <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/podcast/detail/Why-You-Need-More-Than-a-Quiet-Time-Part-1/?v=4096ee8eef7d>.
 - “Why Leaders Need More than a Quiet Time, Part 2,” accessible at <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/podcast/detail/Why-Leaders-Need-More-than-a-Quiet-Time-Pt.-2/?v=4096ee8eef7d>.
 - “Slowing Down for Loving Union,” accessible at <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/podcast/detail/Chapter-4-Slowing-Down-for-Loving-Union/?v=4096ee8eef7d>.