

Vice President Pence Tells America's Next Generation There's Never Been a Better Time to Learn About Leadership

With President Donald Trump preparing to leave Wednesday afternoon for the Bastille Day celebrations in France, Vice President Mike Pence accepted an invitation to speak to the National Student Leadership Conference at American University in Washington, D.C.

During the speech, the vice president brought up 1 Timothy 3:1, which states:

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the office of an overseer, he desires a good work.”

“As the Old Book tells us, whoever aspires to be a leader, desires a noble task,” the vice president said. “And I want to tell each and every one of you, you couldn’t have picked a better time to study leadership, to study leadership at the intersection of public policy and diplomacy and national security.

“At this very moment in this country, we’re witnessing history in the making. Thanks to the leadership of President Trump, we’re in the midst of a great national renewal. We’re seeing a return of security and prosperity to our nation and to our people.

“In a word, I believe we’re living through the restoration of America in its rightful role as leader of the free world. At this very moment, we’re seeing the bold leadership of an

American president on the world stage.”

Later in his speech, the vice president spoke of the model leadership displayed by Jesus:

You know, the leader I most try and emulate each and every day said, nearly 2,000 years ago, that He came not to be served but to serve. And I believe that's the very essence of servant leadership. And there are three qualities in particular that I encourage you to reflect on.

The first is humility. It's often in too scarce a supply in our society today. I mean, the ability to consider others as more important than yourself. For a leader, there's nothing inconsistent about humility and authority. I mean, the truth of the matter is that some of the most compelling leaders I've ever known in my life are people that are focused on others more than themselves, are considerate to others. I truly believe that to reflect humility is to approach leadership every day as a learner and as a listener.

You know, true leaders listen first and then they decide. I remember I was at a meeting during the transition, and we brought in a group of virtually all of the high-tech entrepreneurs and executives in America to meet with our new president—then President-elect Donald Trump. And for the better part of two hours, I witnessed as the president asked one question after another, and then he listened intently to how we could continue to grow jobs in the high-tech sector in America.

And one of the most prominent members of that community came up to me afterwards and said to me how amazed they were at the way the president had spent two hours asking questions and listening to answers. And they asked me if he was like that all the time, and I said, every day. The truth is, our president, he leads by asking questions, and he listens. And I believe that reflects the kind of humility that will

enhance your ability to be a leader.

The second quality of leadership, I believe, in our society today that is most in need is orientation to authority. Recognize and respect those who have been placed above you. Honor them. Learn from them. Follow their example. Give them the honor that they are due. Never that they ask for it, but there's nothing more meaningful when you enter an organization in the years ahead, and you take a time to demonstrate respect for those who have been placed in authority over you; to listen to them and to defer to them, even while you offer them the broadest range of your counsel and your talents.

And lastly, I encourage you—as you develop these inner qualities, the qualities of being leaders that people respect and will follow, I encourage you to embrace self-control in your life. You know, as the Old Book says, like a city whose walls are broken down is the person who lacks self-control. I mean, whether it's in our physical lives, whether it's in our organization each and every day, to practice discipline and to practice self-control is to become the kind of woman and man that people will respect and people will follow.

If you want to make a difference in this complicated world, be different by leading an orderly life, by being an example of humility and orientation and have a servant's heart with all of those around you. You know, I really do believe if you model these three qualities in increasing measure, your service will be of distinction no matter where your life may lead.

The vice president gave one last admonition to the students taking part in the conference, telling them that leadership also brings with it opposition. He said they would need courage to face the adversity that comes with being a leader.

“As President Trump said just a few months ago, nothing worth

doing ever came easy," he said. "Following your convictions means you must be willing to face criticism from those who lack the same courage to do what is right, and no truer words are spoken.

"Anyone who dreams big will encounter those who think small, all right? Anyone who dares to step forward will find those who would rather stay put. And anyone who thinks they can will always hear from those who are sure they can't.

"So I just say to you, cheerfully—expect criticism. Listen to it. Have the humility to learn from it. And then push through it. That's the essence of leadership."

The vice president encouraged the students to keep learning about leadership, noting that as "the future of America," their nation is counting on them as the "rising generation." Then, he urged them to have faith in their calling, abilities and in the confidence that was in them by those who love them and have mentored them.

"Lastly, as the Old Book says—we got a big Bible verse over the mantle in our home. It's been there since the first time I ran successfully for office back in 1999. It simply reads words out of the book of Jeremiah. It says: 'For I know the plans I have for you—plans to prosper you and not to harm you; plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jer. 29:11).

"Today you may be students; tomorrow you will be leaders. And I know that with your help, with your hard work, with your character and with your efforts, and with God's help, this generation will take this country to heights unimaginable and a boundless American future.

"And as you prepare to begin your lives as leaders, be confident. As I look out across this gathering, inspired by the shining faces that are looking back at me, and I look at the leadership of President Trump and the leadership that we enjoy in this nation at every level, I'm confident—and I say

to this rising generation—together, we will make America safe again. We will make America prosperous again. And as our president loves to say, we will make America great again.”
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