

Why Stephen Curry's MVP Is So Important

I returned yesterday from leading a study tour of the Holy Land. For the last 10 days our group walked in the footsteps of Jesus. Every time I travel in Israel, I am reminded of our Lord's sacrificial decision to leave heaven's perfection for our fallen planet so He could feel our pain, bear our sins, die on our cross and rise from our grave.

The Savior who needed nothing from us gave everything to us.

Now consider this: Stephen Curry has become the first unanimous Most Valuable Player in the history of the National Basketball Association. He is one of the greatest scorers the game has ever seen—and an even better person.

When Curry makes one of his long-range jump shots, he points his right finger upward, a practice he began in college at his mother's suggestion. It's an outward sign and internal reminder to give God the glory for his success. Curry says he plays the game "to use the stage I'm on ... for a specific purpose: to be a witness and to share my testimony." (For more, see Mark Cook's *Leadership Lessons from the Warriors*.)

In a day dominated by dueling politicians and ministerial scandals, we long for leaders who lead only to serve. According to writer Douglas Adams, "It is a well-known fact that those people who most want to rule people are, ipso facto, those least suited to do it."

Why do we long for servant leaders?

Because sacrificial love is vital to human flourishing. The physical realm of science is important to our temporal prosperity, but the metaphysical realm of love and relationships is crucial to our eternal souls.

In *When Breath Becomes Air*, Stanford neurosurgeon Paul Kalanithi noted: “To make science the arbiter of metaphysics is to banish not only God from the world but also love, hate, meaning—to consider a world that is self-evidently *not* the world we live in. That’s not to say that if you believe in meaning, you must believe in God. It is to say, though, that if you believe that science provides no basis for God, then you are almost obligated to conclude that science provides no basis for meaning and, therefore, life itself doesn’t have any.”

Kalanithi added: “Science may provide the most useful way to organize empirical, reproducible data, but its power to do so is predicated on its inability to grasp the most central aspects of human life: hope, fear, love, hate, beauty, envy, honor, weakness, striving, suffering, virtue.”

These “most central aspects of human life” are what we long for in leaders today. We can complain about the need for servant leadership in our culture, or we can choose to be what we wish others to become.

So “put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts” (Rom. 13:14). Ask the Holy Spirit to manifest love as His fruit in your life today (Gal. 5:22). Measure success by the degree to which you imitate your Savior by loving others in sacrificial service.

And consider this maxim: To discover if you’re a servant, see how you respond when you are treated like one.