



Praying, Sharing and Being Generous

What's in your pocket right now? Do you know what they found in Abraham Lincoln's pockets on the night of April 14, 1865, the night he was assassinated? Here's some of the list. A country boy's pen knife, a marble, two pair of spectacles, one tied together with string, a sleeve button that had come off, a Confederate five-dollar bill, and 8 newspaper clippings, one of the only ones of its day that were complimentary of him, saying that history would someday call him a great President.

I wonder if the pocket knife was to fix his glasses or was it that Mr. Lincoln enjoyed doing things with his hands since leadership is at times rather ethereal. I like the playful nature of his having a marble, or maybe he rolled it around in his hand as he thought about weighty decisions of the war. Those of us in leadership take ourselves too seriously some days. I wonder if Abe was too busy to fix his broken glasses or maybe he wasn't too worried about them at all?!

My favorite thing to think about however is the articles he carried with him in his jacket pocket that fateful night at the Ford Theater. They talked about how history would see him as a great leader. Do you wonder about your leadership at times? I do

about mine! I'm fascinated that one of the world's great leaders, Abraham Lincoln, appeared somewhat unsure about how he might be doing. I wonder what his thoughts were as he walked the halls of power. I wonder how certain he was of all his decisions. I wonder if he doubted his skill set as a leader.

The Library of Congress rare book and special collections division chief Mark Dimunation notes that the eight newspaper clippings Lincoln carried were "largely positive portrayals of his leadership", yet he stressed that they were "less proof of a president's ego than of a man who needed reassurance. It was a very tough re-election for Lincoln. The war had worn him down... The articles would have been very affirming to him."

By the way, what do you do to appropriately believe in your leadership? Here's one of the ways President Lincoln handled his thoughts. He made this statement to General Dan Sickles, a participant in the battle of Gettysburg: "Well, I will tell you how it was. In the pinch of the campaign up there (at Gettysburg) when everybody seemed panic stricken and nobody could tell what was going to happen, oppressed by the gravity of our affairs, **I went to my room one day and locked the door and got down on my knees before Almighty God and prayed to Him mightily for victory at Gettysburg....** And after that, I don't know how it was, and I cannot explain it, but soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul. The feeling came that God had taken the whole business into His own hands and that things would go right at Gettysburg" [July 5, 1863].

My former boss, the President of Biola University has an antique "prayer kneeler" in his office; it's a padded bench of sorts where he invites God in on his leadership. Since the power of God comes through prayer, maybe we all should consider having one in our offices too.



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