

Leadership

What is a True Leader?

How God develops a True Leader

Moses

- Exodus is essentially the framework from which we can derive what leading IS, what it REQUIRES, and WHERE it takes people. Not just the leader themselves, but the organization as a whole
- “The Book of Exodus records how God’s people failed to cooperate, doubted the vision, disobeyed the rules, worshiped material things, forgot their goals, and soured on their leader—all of which delayed their dream by 40 years. Not only did the people doubt Moses’ leadership, they also doubted God’s. We can learn a great deal from the accounts in Exodus.”

When God Chooses a Leader:

- God gives the leader an emotional investment in the work: Moses “bought into” the idea of freeing the Hebrews well before God called him into the task itself.
- God will affirm the leader through others: Moses told his father-in-law Jethro about his burning bush encounter and Jethro affirmed it.
- God gives the leader mentors: Moses asked for and received help from Jethro, Aaron, and others.
- God builds on the leader’s strengths, experiences, and background: God uses everything in Moses’ background to help him fulfill his calling: the fine education he received in Egypt; his knowledge of Pharaoh; his understanding of Egypt; and his time in the wilderness.
- God often refines the leader’s character in obscurity: Moses basically received a 40-year “seminary education” in the desert.
- God instills in the leader the value of hard work: Moses may not have done a lot while he was initially in the palace in Egypt, but he did work when he was in the desert.
- God sustains that leader with a powerful vision: Moses caught the vision of the Promised Land long before the Hebrews did.
- God brings others alongside the leader to compensate for their weaknesses: Moses enjoyed the help of Aaron as a spokesman, Joshua as a general, and as battle supporter.

Moses at the Burning Bush

In chapter 3 and 4 is where Moses encountered God in a powerful way. It's in these verses that God calls him out and gives him the task of setting the Hebrews free. However, Moses was quick to question God's calling. It's not wrong to have questions for God, because God is able to answer them. However, it's not right to make excuses for why you can't do what God has called you to do. Doing that limits what God is willing to do in our lives. For example, Moses had 5 big excuses he threw back at God:

1. Who Am I? (3:11) Moses struggled with his identity. He just didn't feel qualified; he thought God had picked the wrong leader. *God's response:* It doesn't matter who you are. I am with you (3:12)
2. Who Are You? (3:13) Moses felt a lack of intimacy. He didn't know God well enough to describe Him to the people and lacked convictions concerning his relationship with God. *God's response:* I AM WHO I AM. I AM ever present. I AM everything you need (3:14)
3. What If They Don't Listen? (4:1) Moses felt intimidated. He worried about the people's reaction to him. *God's response:* When I'm finished, they'll listen (4:2-9)
4. I've Never Been A Good Speaker (4:10) Moses fretted about his inadequacies. Who would listen to him if he couldn't even speak well? *God's response:* Guess who made your mouth? (4:11, 12)
5. I Know You Can Find Someone Else (4:13) Moses felt inferior. He compared himself to others—even his brother—and decided that he came up short. *God's response:* OK, I will let Aaron go with you...but I'm still calling YOU to go (4:14)

Moses also learned at the burning bush that God would harden Pharaoh's heart. God was giving Moses a heads-up about difficulties that would come but their purpose was so that God could demonstrate His power. We see later in the next chapter Pharaoh refuses Moses and Aaron's demand. The Israelites became angry with Moses and Aaron, and Moses would then turn to God in anger and confusion (Ex 5:22) and he even questioned why God had sent him!

Key points:

- Leaders need time and experience to grow and prepare for leadership
 - Time

God takes time to prepare leaders. Noah waited 120 years before the rains came. Abraham waited 25 years before his promised son was born. Joseph had to wait 14 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit. Job waited nearly a lifetime to see God's justice and restoration.

- Leading means PLANNING: plan your work and work your plan.
- Leaders should never try to do everything all alone.
- Leaders must be prepared for things to go awry.
- Leaders must continually remind themselves and others of past successes.

- Leaders must repeatedly cast the vision.

Things a True Leader Understands

(See Matt 6)

- Do the right things for the right reasons
- Pray God's Agenda, not your own
- Relationships will make you, or break you
- Prioritize eternal things, not temporal
- Don't sweat the small stuff
- God's kingdom is paramount, seek it first
- Judge yourself before you judge others
- If you need something, ask; if you have something, give it
- Stay true to your convictions
- Obedience to God is the ONLY sure foundation for life

Laws of Inner Circles

Who sits in your inner circle? Do they share your vision? Do they have complementary gifts, useful for where you need them most—OR does that idea threaten you?

Understand that there are NO neutral relationships. People will either bring you up or bring you down. They either add value to your life or they take it.

Jesus

The Wilderness

- Quality leaders can almost always point to a wilderness experience as a part of their leadership preparation.
- When Jesus was in the wilderness, he faced 3 temptations that all leaders face today:
 - The temptation to be self-sufficient (v. 2-4) Jesus didn't become controlling, even with His legitimate needs. He trusted God.
 - The temptation to be spectacular (v. 5-7) Jesus refused to become a stunt man. He didn't perform in order to become a celebrity.
 - The temptation to be powerful (v. 8-10) Jesus wouldn't take a shortcut to gain power or worship.

Ethics of a Leader

Pursue Integrity

I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. (1 Chronicles 29:17)

- in personal character.

Exalt Christ, not self. Be honest, not exaggerating or overpromising; peace-loving, not contentious; patient, not volatile; diligent, not slothful. Avoid and, when necessary, report conflicts of interest and seek counsel.

- in personal care.

Care for the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical dimensions of your person, for “your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19).

- in preaching and teaching.

Interpret the Bible accurately and apply it discerningly: “In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned” (Titus 2:7-8). Speak the truth in love. Give due credit when using the words or ideas of others.

Be Trustworthy

It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

- in leadership.

Model the trustworthiness of God in leadership to encourage and develop trustworthiness in others. Use power and influence prudently and humbly. Foster loyalty. Demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of the entire congregation. Keep promises. Respond sensitively and appropriately to ministry requests and needs: “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much” (Luke 16:10).

- with information.

Guard confidences carefully. Inform a person in advance, if possible, when an admission is about to be made that might legally require the disclosure of that information. Communicate truthfully and discreetly when asked about individuals with destructive or sinful behavior patterns. Tell the truth, or remain discreetly silent: “A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret” (Proverbs 11:13).

- with resources.

Be honest and prudent in regard to personal and ministry resources. Refuse gifts that could compromise ministry. Ensure that all designated gifts are used for their intended purpose: “If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?” (Luke 16:11).

Seek Purity

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

- in maintaining sexual purity.

Avoid sinful sexual behavior and inappropriate involvement. Resist temptation: “Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality” (Ephesians 5:3a).

- in spiritual formation.

Earnestly seek the help of the Holy Spirit for guidance and spiritual growth. Be faithful to maintain a heart of devotion to the Lord. Be consistent and intentional in prayer and scriptural study: “Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

- in theology.

Study the Bible regularly and carefully to understand its message, and embrace biblical doctrine. In forming theology, consider biblical teaching authoritative over all other sources.

- in professional practice.

Identify a minister/counselor who can provide personal counseling and advice when needed. Develop an awareness of personal needs and vulnerabilities. Avoid taking advantage of the vulnerabilities of others through exploitation or manipulation. Address the misconduct of another clergy member directly or, if necessary, through appropriate persons to whom that member of the clergy may be accountable.

Embrace Accountability

Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:2-3)

- in finances.

Promote accepted accounting practices and regular audits. Ensure that church funds are used for their intended ministry purposes.

- in ministry responsibilities.

Ensure clarity in authority structures, decision-making procedures, position descriptions, and grievance policies. Model accountability at the highest organizational levels.

- in a denomination or a ministry organization.

Ensure compliance with denominational standards and expectations, including regular reports.

Facilitate Fairness

Believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism... Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? (James 2:1-4)

- with staff.

Follow approved church and denomination practices in staff selection processes. Advocate for equitable pay and benefits for staff. Provide regular staff team building, affirmation, training, evaluation, and feedback. Be honest with staff regarding areas to celebrate as well as those needing improvement.

- with parishioners.

Ensure appropriate access to staff by parishioners. Preach and teach to meet the needs of the entire congregation. Assume responsibility for congregational health. When asked for help beyond personal competence, refer others to those with requisite expertise.

- with the community.

Build God's Kingdom in cooperation, not competition, with other local ministries. Provide Christian ministries to the public as possible. Encourage good citizenship.

- with a prior congregation.

Do not recruit parishioners from a previous church without permission from the pastor. Avoid interfering in the ministry of a previous congregation.