

Role Models for God's Leaders

A. Tonight we want to acquaint ourselves with a few of God's great leaders, and from that learn what it takes to be a leader in work of God.

1. There will an application of the things we study to husbands, wives, elders, deacons, OR to anyone that is given a charge to keep (a regular duty to perform over others).

B. How important is the topic of leadership?

1. Where would the 12 disciples have been without the leadership of the Lord Jesus?
2. What would the church look like without the leadership of the apostles Jesus specifically chose?
 - a. It would look like a flock of sheep where the flock veers off first in one direction then another depending which one of the sheep was startled.
 - b. We've seen congregations without qualified spiritual leaders and it's an uncomfortable setting in which to worship.

- Members live in fear of the next business meeting.
- People come and go as they please without accountability.
- The church suffers spiritual starvation for lack of any substantive teaching.

[Let's begin by looking at the leadership of Moses.]

I. MOSES' leadership

Exodus 18:13-26 (Jethro counsels Moses)

13 It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. 14 Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?" 15 Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. 16 "When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws."

17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. 18 "You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. 19 "Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, 20 then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do. 21 "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate

dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. 22 “Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. 23 “If you do this thing and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace.”

24 So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.
25 Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.
26 They judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge.

[The leader Moses was doing a lot for the Lord (13), but that’s not what made him a great and effective leader. What made him a great leader is what we learn from this text.]

A. He heeded the advice of an older man (Exo 18:19-23).

1. Jethro said, “Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you” (19).

Proverbs 16:31

31 **A gray head is a crown of glory**; it is found in the way of righteousness.

Proverbs 20:29

29 The glory of young men is their strength, and **the honor of old men is their gray hair**.

2. In just about every case of failed leadership, you will find a person who refused to take advice from a person of wisdom.
 3. There are several cases of that in the Scripture: Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:6-11); Uzziah (2 Chron 26:16-21)
 - a. What happened is that these kings believed that THEY wouldn’t be in the position they were in unless THEY had superior knowledge and wisdom -- and that just wasn’t the case.
 - b. The elders who served Rehoboam also served his father Solomon, and for years they believed Solomon’s reign to be extremely oppressive.
 - c. And the priest Azariah had the Law of God on his side.
 4. What leaders have to realize is that while they have unique characteristics and skills, which qualify them for leadership, they are not above taking instruction themselves from wise sources.
 5. Moses, because he was a meek man, kept his ears and mind open to wise advice.
- B. He delegated some of his work to qualified men (Exo 18:21, 24-26; cf. Acts 6).

1. “Men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain” (21).
2. Now the Scripture states that Moses chose them (25), but we are not told just how he chose them – whether by inspiration of God or by asking for recommendations – and if the later was his method, it demonstrates again his willingness to heed advice.

C. The work he delegated, however, did not involve his primary duties (Exo 18:19-20).

1. Nobody respects the boss who hires employees just so he can sit back and watch them do work he doesn't want to do.
2. No, Moses still had a lot of work to do; he had work to do that no one else could do but him.
3. Jethro said, “19 **You** be the people's representative before God, and **you** bring the disputes to God, 20 then [**you**] teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.”
4. “Moses, God made you the lawgiver for these people, that's your primary role; delegate everything else to others.”

5. Well, the apostles recognized the importance of doing that early on, delegating not their primary duties, but work that didn't involve their primary role as apostles.

Acts 6:1-3

1 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, ***"It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, select from among you*** seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

6. And I kind of wonder if that's not what Moses did it too.

[Moses teaches us that leaders will teach (1 Tim 3:2), live lives worthy of imitation (Heb 13:7), and they will put qualified people to work.]

II. JOSHUA'S leadership

Numbers 27:15-18

15 Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, 16 “May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord will not be like sheep which have no shepherd.” 18 So the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;

A. Joshua did not ambitiously seek leadership (Num 27:15-16, 18; cf. Acts 20:28).

1. No, Moses took his leadership concerns to the Lord, and the Lord made His choice.
2. Your greatest leaders are not the men who in their youth said, "I'm going to be the President (elder, preacher) someday."
3. No, your greatest leaders are men who set reasonable goals in life and who learn through experience the requirements of leadership by observing leaders...
... and having done that, then honestly evaluate themselves as to whether they could or even should lead.
4. Joshua had no idea as to what was about to happen to him, but he was ready because he had been walking in Moses sandals and observing His life for many years.
5. He was not driven by a lust for power.

B. He assumed the role of a shepherd (Num 27:17; cf. 1 Pet 5:2).

1. He would lead the Israelites out and bring them in (17).

2. Joshua didn't know it at the time, but he was just about ready to take the mantle of leadership from Moses.

3. God had been observing Joshua, and He was now calling Joshua to do something that he was fully capable of doing -- shepherding Israel.

C. He possessed the Spirit before being appoint-ed to his post (Num 27:18; cf. Gal 5:22-23).

1. He had a godly character.

2. This is more evidence that Joshua had been observing Moses, and God had been observing Joshua.

3. That's where spiritual leaders come from; they are picked out, selected by God for having the Spirit of God.

4. They are like a ripe apple pulled off a tree at just the right time to be enjoyed.

Numbers 27:19-23

19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. 20 "You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him. 21 "Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the Lord. At his command they shall go out and at his

command they shall come in, both he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation.” 22 Moses did just as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23 Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.

D. His appointment inspired obedience because it was legitimate (Num 27:20; cf. Heb 13:17).

1. The Lord conferred Joshua’s appointment, and Moses and Eleazar concurred.
2. There were no underhanded dealings, no politicking, and no rush to coronation.
3. Everything was handled justly, and for two generations Israel was the better for it.

E. He inquired of the Lord before he led the people (Num 27:21; cf. Jer 10:23).

1. He would first go to the High Priest to seek God’s will on a matter (particularly in regard to his military exploits in securing the land).
2. The Urim and Thummim (small objects of wood or stone) were put inside a pouch within the breastplate of the High Priest.

a. Scholars used to say those words mean (lights and perfections), but today they lean toward (guilty and innocent).

b. It was one way that God comminuted His will through the High Priest once Moses, God’s spokesman, had left the earth.

3. A spiritual leader first *inquires* of the Lord, then he *acts*.

Joshua 1:5-8

1 “No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. 6 “Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 “Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. 8 “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

F. He trusted the Lord’s promises and became strong, courageous and filled with God’s law.

1. All leaders have a starting point at which their metal has yet to be tested; Joshua was at that point.

2. But we know by reading the Book of Joshua and into Judges 1 that he remained strong, courageous and filled with the Law of God throughout his life's mission.

Joshua 24:14-15, 31

14 "Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and **put away the gods which your fathers served** beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15 "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but **as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.**"

31 **Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua**, and had known all the deeds of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

Joshua 1:8-11

8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. 9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 " Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you, to possess it.'"

- G. He delegated some of his work, like Moses did, to qualified men (Josh 1:10).

1. He didn't pull a scene out of Mel Gibson's Braveheart and rouse the troops by himself, Joshua commissioned other qualified men to stir up the army of the Lord.

2. That's badly needed today (Heb 10:24).

Joshua 1:12-15

12 To the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, 13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, 'The Lord your God gives you rest and will give you this land.' 14 "Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them, 15 until the Lord gives your brothers rest, as He gives you, and they also possess the land which the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."

- H. He reminded his people of their commitments (Josh 1:12-15; cf. 1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 4:2).

- I. He did not disrespect his predecessor or speak derogatory of him. (Josh 1:13, 15).

Joshua 1:16-18

16 They answered Joshua, saying, “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 “Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the Lord your God be with you as He was with Moses. 18 “Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous.”

- J. He inspired cooperation or fellowship in the work of the Lord (Josh 1:16-18).
1. Some leaders inspire only fear, but effective leaders inspire the spirit of cooperation for a common cause.
 2. Remember, Joshua didn't say, “You will put away your idols because I'm telling you to, and if you don't I'll send the army out to gather you up and have you stoned.”
 3. No, Joshua said in essence, “My family and I are going to serve the Lord! Israel, are you with us?”
 4. And how did Israel respond to that? We just read it. “You will be like Moses to us.”