

Introduction to Biblical Leadership

Leadership in Biblical Hebrew

The word “lead” occurs 110 times in 124 verses in the NIV and is interpreted as to reign, sitting on the throne, to rule, to command, to charge, to order, to give charge over, to escort, to guide, to live, to walk with God, to live a manner of live, as well as leader, ruler, officer and guide.

In the Old Testament emphasis is placed on God’s leadership, His divine rule and sovereignty over all creation which gives him the right of leadership. The Law of Moses declares . . .

- Reigns forever (Exodus 15: 18)
- His divine rule is declared among the nations (1 Chronicles 16:31)
- He reigns over them (Psalms 47:8, 96:10)
- His rules makes the nations tremble (Psalm 99:1)
- His reign makes the earth glad and demands praise (Psalms 97:1; 99:2)
- His reign is sustained by His infinite power (Psalm 66:7)

God’s absolute rule and reign over creation and humanity is recounted numerous times by using the term “command” in the OT.

- The Lord brought the world into existence by his “Command.” (Psalm 33:9; 148:5; Job 38:12)

Leaders are appointed by God for his purposes (2 Samuel 7:7). He raises up and puts down kings, judges, princes and nations, for his purposes. (Job 12:17, 19)

When his people are willing, God gently leads His people with care (Psalm 23:2; Isaiah 40:11).

God is the absolute monarch, who holds absolute power, absolute authority over all things.

What is Leadership?

Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal.

What do effective leaders do?

- Build _____ & achieve _____.
- Lead _____, _____ & their _____.

Leaders are, first of all, men and women of vision. They believe that, by God's grace, the impossible or at least the improbable can become possible.

To put it another way, leaders are people of faith.

- Abraham left the security of home, family, and friends to search for the promised land, a land of dreams.
- Moses trusted God to set his unarmed, weak, helpless people free from the most powerful nations on earth.
- Joseph repeatedly made the best of lousy situations. Do any of these men speak of you?

Some of the leaders in Scripture such as Paul had a ***methodical, expansive*** vision.

Other leaders in Scripture such as Barnabas had a vision more ***focused on individual people***.

A second characteristic of Biblical leaders is that they take initiative and motivate others to take action with them. Consider Nehemiah and Obadiah.

A leader knows that he is inadequate in himself. Consider John 5:19-20:

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

Chuck Swindoll said "Inferiority is caused by dependence on self, whereas inadequacy leads to dependence on God."

Leaders are men and women of action who get things done. They don't wait to be called upon. Remember that if God leads you somewhere that requires more of your heart, then step out in faith, and God will order your steps. **Two-thirds of God's name is Go!**

A third characteristic of leaders in Scripture is that they were passionate.

Consider Paul and other leaders in Scripture, as well as Christian leaders throughout history, whose ministry was never just a job, but a calling. They were always on duty. What fueled their burning passion?

Fourth characteristic - Biblical leaders are faithful and are people who do their jobs. Faithful people have stick-to-it-iveness. They persevered, kept their word and fulfilled their obligations. Paul compared ministry to farming (*1 Cor. 3:6*) or child-rearing (*1 Thess. 2:7ff*), both long-term efforts. In these two professions, rewards are only given to those who persevere. Those who quit early face not only the shame of failure, but also the loss of the crop or the child as well.

A fifth and final characteristic of Leaders in Scripture is their consistent display of humility. In Paul's letters, how did he usually introduce himself to his readers?

What was the meaning of David saying "The Lord is my Shepherd?"

Nehemiah prayed, "O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God...let your ears be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying." (*Neh. 1:5-6*)

None of these three men lacked ego strength, yet they were still humble. They were humble because they saw themselves as men **under God's authority sent to carry out His will. They were servants before anything else.** To be a servant leader requires humility. Read Philippians 2:1 – 8

The truth of the matter is that **Pride** is the strength of sin.

The road to humility (and the greatest antidote to prideful arrogance) is prayer. Why is that the case?

Keep in mind that you can only lead to the degree you are willing to serve. Mt. 23:11...Greatest in the kingdom is servant of all. And John 13:1-5 tells us that the more you serve the greater you become.

We also see that the work to which we are called is really an impossible mission without the Holy Spirit. While the human leader can assist, the senior partner in the venture must always be God Himself. Paul said, I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.